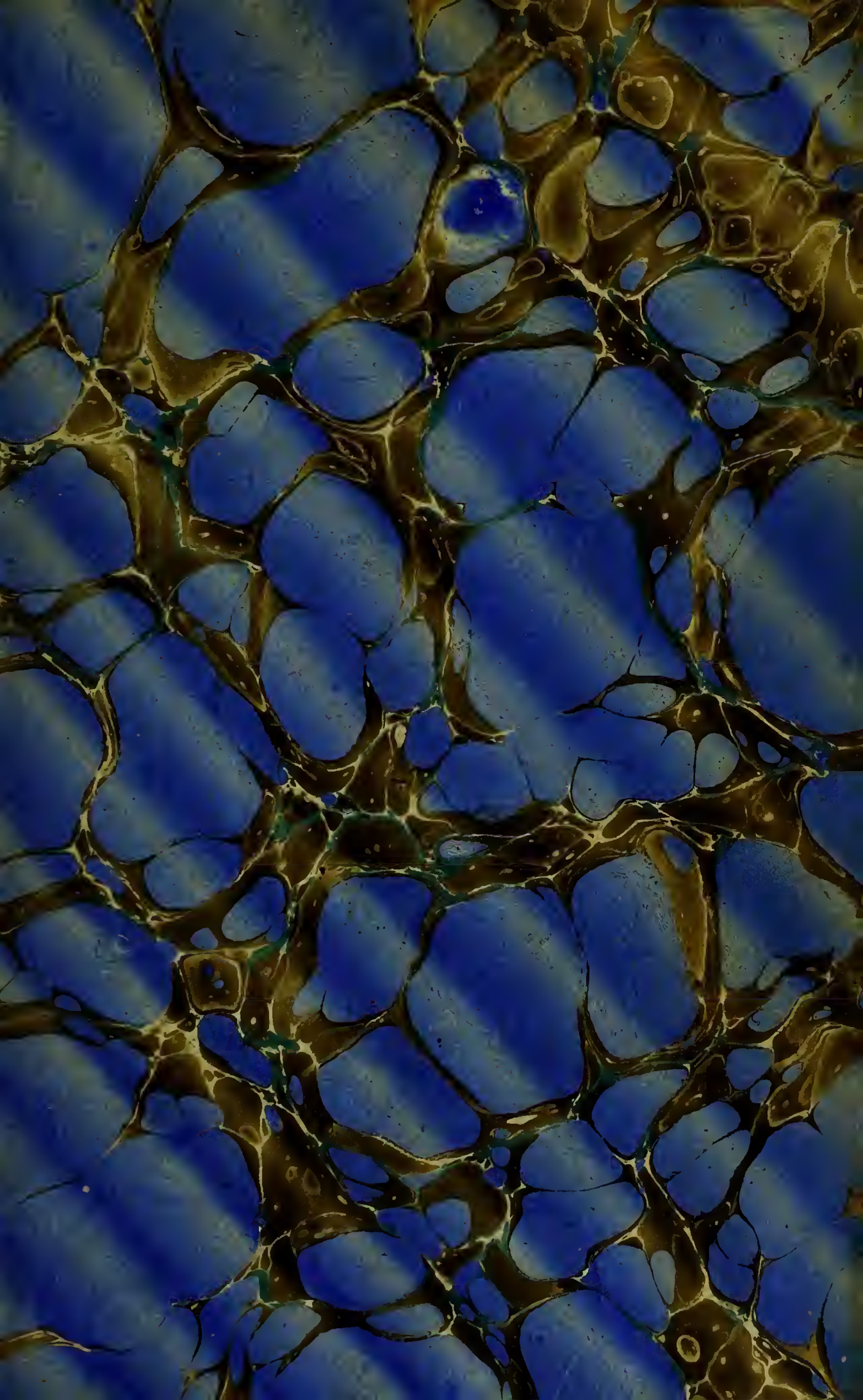




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ADVENTURES
OF
A MEDICAL STUDENT.

BY
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WITH
A MEMOIR OF THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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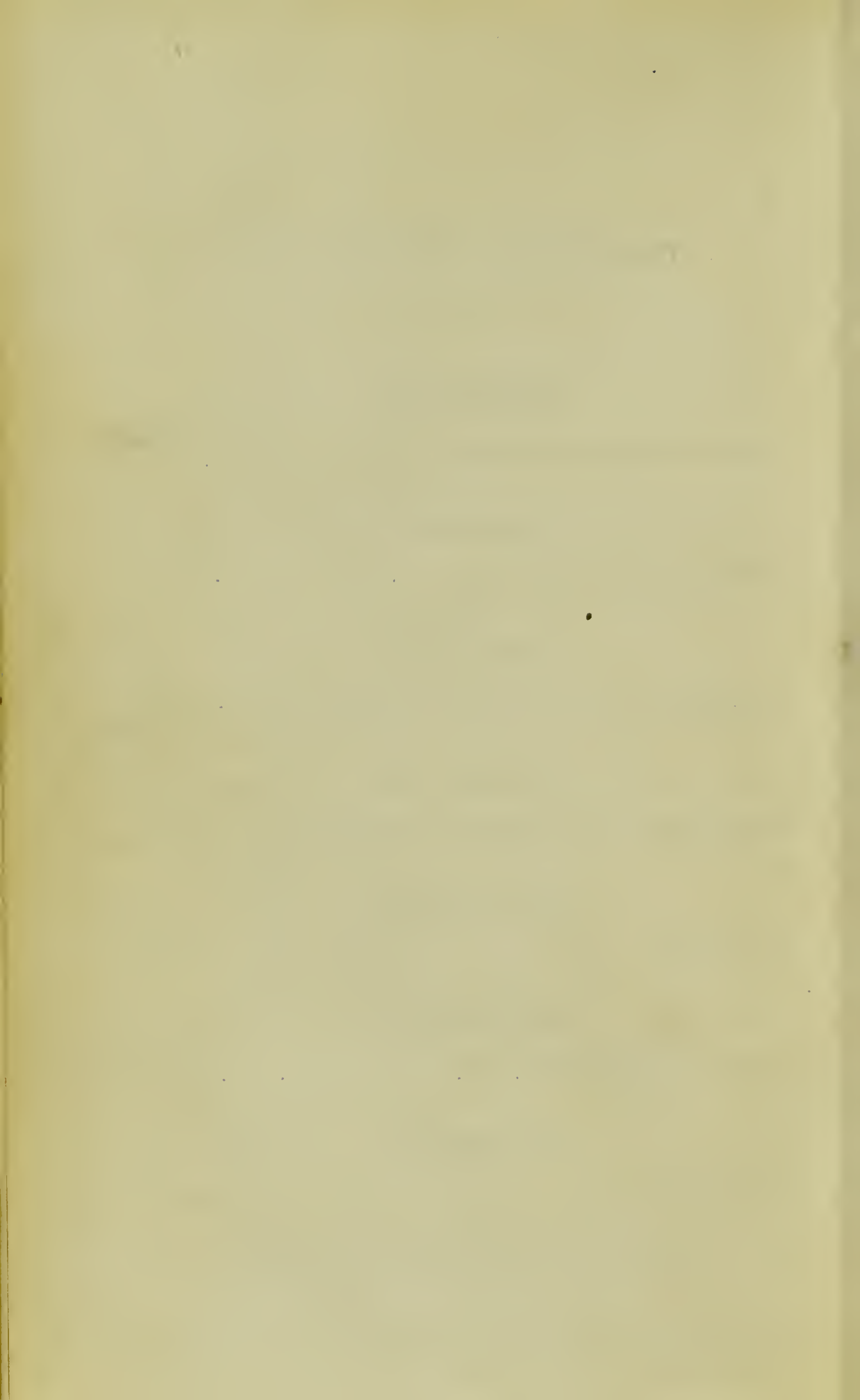
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ADVENTURES
OF A
MEDICAL STUDENT.

CHAPTER IX.

STORY OF A GENIUS, CONTINUED.

LILIAS returned to her home : that home which was become a house of mourning and of wretchedness to her. Her life was now one tissue of sorrow, un-availing though bitter regret, and gnawing self-condemnation, mingled with, or rather added to, the still fervid passion, the undeviating affection toward him, the truant. As yet her heart could not call him deceiver.

The most alarming of all prospects was before her—that which women tremble at in the dread word RUIN!—worse than death to one of her education and feelings—worse than even the wrath that follows

it; and yet she could not curse him; no! how could she even think ill of him, so beautiful, so kind, so gifted, whose society had once been her happiness—whose sole fault to be blamed withal was a diminution in his love for her? Yes, the greatest of all her griefs, greater than all her fears of discovery, disgrace, death—greater was the pang of absence from him.

But at times would come hope, nay, certainty, that he would yet return ere time made discovery of their guilt unavoidable. Their guilt?—alas! her conscience as yet fondly acknowledged that *their* guilt, and not *his* guilt, was the right expression. He knew not of this damning proof of their having eaten of the tree of Paradise; if he did, would he not hasten to atone, to defend, to die with her?—would he not? He would once: but that is changed. Ah! but even if his love be changed, his high honour is still the same.

There were moments of this hope, but they were few compared to the hours of despair—few, but so delicious! It was when these visited her that she would throw her shawl hastily around her, and walk to the town to seek the sympathy of Mrs. Merrick, who, ere long, became to her as her own mother.

Every day that she could leave her father's house she was sure to find her way to the good old matron, whose kind heart had no reproach for her, and from whom she had nothing to conceal, who loved the same darling object as herself, and was also pining at his absence, and earnest and anxious for his welfare, though only as a parent, not as a lover. With her she could discourse of all his noble qualities—his genius, his affection, his success; with her she could bewail her own hapless fortune and share away her sorrow.

How anxiously did they wait for tidings of him! Oh! the bitterness of hope deferred, as day after day went over and yet no letter—no token of his remembrance—of his existence; while ever the dreaded evil was gradually but most surely advancing to a consummation.

The first intelligence they had of his movements was a notice in the theatrical report of a newspaper. In criticising the acting at Drury-lane, it went on to state that the part of *Lorenzo* (Merchant of Venice) was played by a young gentleman (Mr. Merrick) of some provincial celebrity, who certainly threw un-

common vigour into his performance, and was much applauded.

Still there was nothing from himself. A month passed, and, save his name in advertisements, he was altogether dead to them.

Lilias was heart-sick. It was hard for the slender hope that she now had to bear up against the load of apprehension that crushed her spirit. At length on entering Mrs. Merrick's house one morning she was met by the joyful mother, whose hand held a letter. She almost dropped to the ground as it was thrust into her trembling hand, and became pale and cold as she read it.

It merely stated that he was well, had enclosed a bank postbill for twenty pounds, and desired to be remembered to Miss Raby. It was dated London, and desired them not to write to him acknowledging it till he should have written them again, as he was about to change his address.

And this was all! Frequently the fond thought had crossed her mind that many letters addressed to her might have miscarried—been intercepted; but the strain of this epistle, the desire to be merely re-

membered, convinced her that she had lost him for ever.

Poor Liliass ! she sat a little, and endeavoured to talk, to hope still ; but it was in vain. She rose, left the house, and went home ; where, seeking the solitude of her own chamber, she fell upon her couch, and resigned herself to the wormwood draught of her affliction.

For some days she was really and seriously ill, confined to bed ; then she arose and went about as usual ; but the poison had entered into her frame—the virus of that strange disorder laughed at under the name of “a broken heart ;” that malady of the body, arising as it were by a mysterious contagion from an analogous malady of the mind ; that disease whose pathology no man can explain, but whose symptoms the wise physician can well detect, and which, by judicious treatment, he may greatly mitigate, or even hope to cure.

About a fortnight after the above, another letter was received by his mother, containing his address, and stating that, as his expenses turned out to be greatly beyond his expectations, she must not look for another remittance early, and recommending her

to practise frugality. This paper contained no allusion whatever to Lilius.

Being now in possession of his address, they eagerly finished and despatched a letter to him, detailing, in as forcible language as they could put together, the state, physical and mental, of his betrothed, and imploring his immediate return.

A month passed over before any answer was received to this: then came a letter, long but cold. He could not, he said, desert his engagement; no other, in the then state of the theatrical circles, could be got to fill it. He expressed infinite regret for what had happened between himself and Miss Raby, his resolution to make every reparation as soon as opportunity offered, and his desire that, in the event of her home being rendered unpleasant to her, she should seek shelter with his mother. This was the last letter they received from him: others did ultimately find their way into their possession, which will be given hereafter, but they referred to them only in the third person.

And now, when we come to paint the anguish of the blighted girl, forsaken by her first and only love—deserted by him to whom, confiding in his honour and

affection, she had yielded that which should have been her passport to respect in this world and happiness in the next—betrayed by the man in whom her trust had been so strong as to make her resign for it her trust in her Maker—treated with contempt by the lover towards whom her heart yet, in spite of all, burned with unextinguishable passion,—when we try to paint this, then it is we feel how utterly inadequate the rude minds of our own sex are to form even an imaginary idea of the torturing feeling, much less to find words or phrases that would convey half its bitterness to the conception of another. But a woman, and one that feels or can look back to having felt the deep passion, occurring but once in the lifetime even of woman, who exists for no other end but to love,—she only will appreciate it; one who has been deceived, betrayed—if haply into the hand of any such this narrative should come—she alone will fully *know* it.

What with the many ailments naturally incidental to her situation, and the harrowing agony of mind that preyed upon her, she now could scarcely ever leave her room. Anxiety had hollowed her pallid cheeks; her eye had a dry, hot appearance, and looked con-

tinually with a wild, furtive, starting glance around her ; moreover, she had induced upon her a habit of mental absence, and a way of muttering to herself with her dry colourless lips, that were often chapped and bleeding. Her step was quick and stealthy, and her frequent sighs sounded groanlike. Despair, the vampire, had settled on her brow, and would not be driven from his hold.

Strange thoughts of suicide crossed her mind, but she lacked animal courage sufficient for the deed ; yet how she prayed for death ! That she wished for it you may well conceive. Did she ever imprecate evil upon his head ? Oh no ! when his name arose in this strange devotion, it was for good and not for evil, for blessing and not curses.

There is a poem by Tennyson, one of the most singular and beautiful pieces in all modern literature, that admirably depicts a woman in an analogous situation : you know it—it is “Mariana in the Moated Grange,” and its burden runs—

She only said, “ My life is dreary,
 He will not come,” she said ;
She said, “ I am aweary, aweary,—
 Oh God, that I were dead !”

Five months had passed since Merrick left her—five months of this anguish! No confidant, no friend had she, save his mother, and her at an early period only; for, as time went on, she cowered at home alway, shrinking from every eye that might read her secret. And all this while she had to dress her face in smiles, to meet the suitor her father's care had selected for her, and whom she could not but esteem, for he was an exemplary young man and prosperous in the world—a gentleman, moreover, in birth and every other respect.

At length her disgrace could no longer be concealed; the servants had long been aware of it, but had from very compassion refrained from its disclosure. Then the suitor—but it was some time ere he allowed himself to be convinced by his senses—she was so girlish, so delicate, so gentle, so strictly educated, so little apparently acquainted with the world: when he did, he made no remark, but went into exile from the place of his kindred.

At last, even the eye of the venerable Dr. Raby perceived it. Thereupon a long train of remarkable circumstances arose in his mind, which were now all reconcilable by this damning fact: he was struck

powerless. For some hours he could do nothing, lost in a maze of thought. At last, going to her apartment, he demanded an account of the truth.

The poor girl, when she heard the idea mooted by her father, for whom under heaven she entertained most awe of any being, was terror-stricken. She dropped into a chair, and sat staring at him, unable to utter a word. Her eyes were dilated and moveless, her face pale as that of a corpse, while her lips, half open, quivered every now and then unconsciously, but gave no sound.

When the old clergyman saw that his suspicions were all the truth, and that the glory was indeed departed from his house, he covered his face with his hands, and, stooping forward as he sat, groaned aloud, the while the big tears dropped from between his fingers upon the carpet. But she continued in silence to regard him with the same dead stony gaze.

When this had continued for some time, he rose and tardily withdrew, actually tottering as he left the room. She sat for a little without change, then, rising slowly and quietly, lay down upon her bed without undressing: the candle wasted to the socket, the fire burnt itself out, and daylight next morning saw her in

the same position in which she had laid herself that evening.

A servant, entering, with a look of extreme compassion and respect put into her hands a letter, and withdrew. It was in the old man's handwriting—but how different from the hard, formal, old-fashioned character he usually wrote! It was all awry, blotted, and interlined with numerous spots, where the ink was faint and bluish, as if drops had fallen there. He had sat up all night to write it, and was now locked in his library to await its effect.

It was very long. He alluded in direct, matter-of-fact terms to her offence, expressed his utter amazement at it, and certainty it could be owing to no fault of education or care on his part, but rather to some innate predisposition to evil existing in her own nature. There was much to the above effect, especially bearing upon the plebeian rank of her paramour, then it proceeded—

“I expect, therefore, that, immediately on the receipt of this, you will leave my house for ever, and seek society suited to the state to which your sin and folly have reduced you. I have taken care that poverty shall be no excuse for persistance in the

course you have begun. Messrs. W—— and Co., by this morning's post, receive directions to honour your demands to the extent of fifty pounds annually, with which to keep you above necessity. It is my earnest hope and prayer you may be enabled to practise a course of life, virtuous at least in a degree. The housekeeper will make every arrangement with regard to your removal. Farewell, and may God bless you !”

When she had read this, after sitting for a few moments to collect her thoughts, she arose without a murmur and proceeded to put on a walking dress ; then, packing a few things in a handkerchief, she went out of the house. As she walked through the passage, her two young sisters stood looking wistfully at her—their eyes tear-filled—afraid to speak to her, regarding her with awe as a kind of devoted being.

And thus was cast out upon the world this unfortunate, whose crime was having loved and trusted too fondly. She had now nowhere to lay her head, who had been reared in all daintiness—whose foot had wont to sink in the texture of the rich carpet—whose limbs were used to be moulded on the couch of

down—who knew not what it was to do aught for herself that could be ministered by the hands of a menial.

The season was April, with weather in general raw and stormy; but He that tempers the wind to the shorn lamb had made that day clear, sunny, and scarcely cold. She moved slowly along the lengthened avenue, crossed the highway, and went up among the lanes of the Woodlands, till, coming to an open, grassy space, she sat down upon a knoll alone and motionless in her utter desolation. Many hours did she continue thus. No one came near her; but the housewives of the neighbourhood watched her with deep feeling from the angles of the roads or breaks in the hedges. At length one sent her daughter, a sweet little favourite, by name Mary Bradshaw, with a bowl of warm milk to her. She took it, drank part, then, kissing the child upon the brow, rose and moved away towards A—z. It was more staggering than walking, for she had always been a delicate creature, and her bodily and mental energy were now completely prostrated.

Late in the evening she reached the house of Mrs. Merrick, upon whose bosom her anguish at length

found relief in tears, and immediately after she dropped into a deep and lengthened slumber. The matron, as she watched her, saw her wan face beam once again with the sweet shy smile that had of old characterized it, and heard her murmur audibly the word “Hamlet !” The dream was happy, but think of the awaking !

Her health was now falling away rapidly. She never left her bed. There she remained continually, while her venerable nurse ministered to her with more than the assiduity and tenderness of a mother. Indeed, by that name she always called her. Her voice had now acquired a lengthened, low, plaintive tone, ineffably sweet and mournful ; her every action was sluggish and careless ; and ever and anon, as she lay, she sighed very deeply, as if her life were coming with the breath. But still she seemed to take some pleasure, albeit of a melancholy cast, in combing her long hair, which was luxuriant, soft, and of a beautiful chestnut-colour, and in hourly cleaning her small, white, and very graceful hands.

There was yet no note of him. She had ceased now to hope for any ; but still she loved to talk of him with his mother, and to listen to her anecdotes of his inno-

cent boyhood. She liked, too, to hear her talk of his talents with pride, and dream of what he would yet become. But when she spoke of his return to them, her reply was a faint smile and a sorrowful shake of the head, with perhaps,—

“I am afraid I shall never see it, mother.”

At length as time went on she became the mother of an infant, which did not survive its third day. She did not exhibit much maternal emotion at this event, probably because her heart was already occupied to the full with one object.

Getting over the immediate ailment connected with this occurrence, she recovered, to the extent only of her former pining, decaying condition. Still she never arose from her bed, but there remained, gradually wasting away with consuming sorrow.

The surgeon that was called in was at first inclined to consider consumption the disorder, but the experience of a few visits convinced him that this was an error, her lungs being as healthy as any other part of her frame; but at length he lighted upon the true proximate cause—“a mind diseased.” He advised change of scene. When she heard him, shaking her head, she buried it more deeply in her pillow, as if she

had said, "I have chosen my resting-place, and will not be removed."

Mrs. Merrick had all this while been drawing, with her consent, upon her father's bankers, for they had no other means of finding their bread, Merrick having sent no remittance since the one last alluded to. Every order that bore the slightly traced signature of Lilius Raby was honoured immediately, and without remark, and thus these women were enabled to preserve unprofaned the sanctity of their grief.

But while she was thus surely gliding to the grave, an event happened that threw a new and most vivid light upon the latter portion of the lapse.

A young man of very great natural abilities, but bashful and retired habits, had filled the situation of scene-painter and property-man at the theatre in which Merrick played at A—z. Between them an intimacy had latterly sprung up, greater than existed between the latter and any other friend. The one was an enthusiast in painting as much as was the other in acting, and the difference of their pursuits preventing any jarring of envy, while their intellects were thus formed to agree, the consequence was, that in the few months they were together this young man had acquired his

confidence to a degree which another individual could not in years have obtained.

When Merrick left for London he promised to do his utmost to advance the fortunes of his comrade, and a regular correspondence ensued between them. But, about a month after the birth of Liliás's infant, this person was killed suddenly in the theatre, by the fall of one of the iron weights that hung as counterpoises to the ponderous curtain. His father, with whom he had lived, and who was a working man of a higher sort of grade, finding among his books and papers a number of letters signed Francis Merrick, and hearing it stated by a neighbour of his mother that she had received no intelligence of him lately, at once packed them up, and himself called with them to relieve her mind. He was a very illiterate man, unable to understand the style of language they were written in, and, having merely spelt through some sentences of them, he delivered them up without further knowledge of their contents.

Upon his withdrawal poor Liliás called for them with frantic eagerness, her behaviour being in perfect contrast to what it had been an hour before. Her hands trembling, her cheek flushed, her eyes glisten-

ing, she hurriedly arranged them by their dates, pressing them to her lips and bosom the while, and then plunged into their sense.

The first one or two were such as might be expected from one young man of ability to another, upon a change in locality, fortune, and habits, to which that other also looked forward. He described London generally, the aspect of the streets, price of lodgings, food, &c. Then the theatres were minutely gone over, their sites, size, architecture, scenery—the players, their line and style of acting, personal appearance, apparent ages, and the probable returns they drew from their profession.

Then there were others filled with his difficulties—disappointments; his dependence on ——; that gentleman's efforts, and finally success, in obtaining for him an engagement. His first appearance in the third-rate character of *Lorenzo* he described at length, in those terms which a man conscious of talent feels no scruple in using to a confidential and unenvying friend.

But shortly she came to a letter that riveted her attention. It was a long, closely-written paper, every word regarding a distinguished comic actress, whom

we shall here denominate Mrs. B——. Her ravishing beauty, and either real or well-acted girlish simplicity, he particularly dwelt upon. Her consummate histrionic talent was also a theme with him of warm admiration, as were many other accomplishments he had had opportunity of seeing her display. All this was done in the most glowing language.

As Lilius read it she several times uttered sudden gasping screams, while Mrs. Merrick stood by, wondering and fearing. Her whole aspect became changed to one expressing surprise, terror, and wofully gratified curiosity ; and she hurried along, devouring the manuscript with her starting eyes.

Another letter contained some account of the private character of this woman ; her numerous intrigues ; the multitudes of high-gifted and high-born men that glittered in her orbit. Then he described how he had watched her eye, and was convinced that it viewed not his graceful presence and animated acting with indifference. The next letter contained his introduction to her, and certainty from her own words that he was a favoured admirer. And now he did indeed dilate on the high attractions, personal and mental, of this goddess of the stage, in all the impassioned and

redundant language of vehement love. How he raved in writing of his violent attachment to her—his hatred of the nobleman who was then her reigning favourite. The ignorance, want of taste, and want of real education of this individual he particularly ridiculed, and with bitterness described the subterfuges he himself had to adopt when present with them, to prevent the titled and moneyed ass, as he styled him, from observing their intimacy.

Another of them gave an account of the termination of his friendship with ——. While both were dining at ——— House, the dwelling of a distinguished baron, whose appreciation and patronage of genius were so original and so eminent as almost to entitle himself to rank as a man of genius, an ignorant dowager happened to remark that Merrick pleased her as *Laertes* much better than ——— as *Hamlet*, the latter's long speeches having the effect of making her sleepy. Though this was received with silence by the rest of the party, it had, according to Merrick's statement, such an effect upon his friend that ever after he appeared desirous of dropping the connexion. This, however, he continued, did not so much affect him, his whole thought being now devoted to the fascinating

Mrs. B——. With this theme was the rest of the letter filled, as was also the one following it in date, certain particulars in which, that were never intended for any but the eyes of his friend, struck very daggers into the heart of Miss Raby. Moreover, throughout all the latter letters of the series were scattered frequent allusions to herself—expressions of bitter regret for her unfortunate connexion with him—that frequently her image rose upbraidingly before him, when wantoning in the society of his adored actress—that she hung as a millstone around his conscience as their paths through life must now be ever separate—that if he were to marry her it would but be entailing endless misery on both.

There was much more to this purport, as she read which she pressed the paper between her palms and looked upward.

But the last of them was indeed a remarkable one. It was wafered to that preceding, as if to prevent it going astray. It was written on a dirty scrap of black-edged paper, in fact, the back of an old funeral letter, and was expressed in the following strange and striking language:—

“My dear ——,

“I am lost! Despair—despair! I am ruined—disgraced—damned—*hissed from the stage!* Oh, is it come to this? I am a drunkard—a beast! I have been a villain, a traitor to those that loved me, and thus has Heaven requited me, by leaving me in my pride to myself.

“I came drunk to the —— theatre on the night of the royal visit. The stage-manager was busy, and not observing it, allowed me to go on in that state. As soon as the glare of light struck me I became dizzy and confused—staggered—forgot at once cue and part. The audience laughed and hissed. It was the first time. I got infuriated. Mad with passion, and regardless from intoxication, I rushed up to the foot-lights, and made some brutal gestures and expressions of contempt. The whole crowded house rose to their feet upon the instant, and launched at me a withering blast of scorn and execration that drove me reeling backwards before it like a palpable whirlwind.

“I was drawn aside, and thrust ignominiously out by the stage-door, while the distant roar of the excited audience rang in my ears. I have not been in my

senses since then—liquor is necessary to my existence. Oh my poor dear mother!—and *thou*!

“Dear ——, send me up some money immediately; I have not a farthing. All’s gone on drunkenness, or worse. I am cut by everybody—laughed at by *her*—drowned in debt, and skulking from arrest. I have no lodging—I slept last night among the hampers in one of the markets. I dare not write home—you are my only friend. Will you too desert me? Oh, genius, thou curse of God—”

The rest ran into the black edging of the paper, and was illegible.

This letter Lilius read hurriedly aloud, and when she could read no more she clapped her hands wildly above her head, and fell back upon her pillow in a fit of loud laughter.

Mrs. Merrick took it at first to be a laugh of exultation at the ruin of him who had ruined her; but soon she saw it was hysterical, and that the weak girl’s life was in immediate danger.

The surgeon was sent for, but ere his arrival she had become calm.

The second day after the receipt of these papers was a bright and sunny one, early in May. At noon

the heat was so great that the window of her room required to be opened, and the moted and humming rays of the gladsome sun streamed slanting in a cubic flood upon the carpet.

She could not now easily change her posture without assistance. Her voice had become exceedingly weak and tiny, but still distinct and inexpressibly sweet in sound, like a harpstring touched by the light finger of the wind.

“Mother, dear,” said she, “come and smooth down my pillow, and lay me with my face toward the Woodlands.”

With tearful eyes the assiduous and gentle old woman complied, and sat down to read to her from an ancient commentary on the scriptures. What with the reading and the warmth she gradually dropped asleep in her chair, and did not awaken till the sun had long been “westering in his bower.”

Starting up, she ran to the bedside to know if sweet Lily wanted anything: but her Lily was not there; she had flown away and was at rest; but ere she took her flight had dropped a smile back upon the pale face of the corpse that lay where she had been.

It would be tedious in this already lengthened tale

to paint the affliction of the excellent widow. It would be but adding to the heap of sorrow with which it is already overcharged.

Two days afterwards Dr. Raby had his daughter's remains removed, and interred, not at the Woodlands, but in St. Philip's churchyard in A—z, an alien from the graves of her kindred.

But Mrs. Merrick had more cause than mere broken affection to deplore the death of her adopted daughter. With it ceased the supply of money whereon she subsisted; and her son having long ceased to make any remittances—her household furniture moreover being seized, partly for debts of his contracting—she became now in all the word's senses a beggar. But the public benevolence had provided for cases like hers, and she found refuge, crazed and doting, in one of the hospitals of the town, where shortly she yielded up her spirit, unknown and unregarded.

Many years after the occurrence of these events, we—or to use the more convenient first person, I, the Medical Student of these papers, was a pupil at the chief hospital of A—z. Attached to it was a dispensary, at which a surgeon attended regularly, to afford advice to such poor as did not, from the nature of their

ailments, require to be confined to the wards. It was my department for some time to act as surgical clerk or assistant at this dispensary, which was attended by from twenty to fifty patients daily.

Among these my attention was soon especially drawn to one, a man of peculiar and noticeable aspect, slight, and rather over the middle size, who complained of a number of anomalous symptoms—weakness, cough, dizziness, sleeplessness, palpitation, and others, all indicative, apparently, of a general break-up in his constitution. When I saw him I judged him to be a poor artist, a tavern singer, a teacher of music unemployed, or of some such avocation. His dress had a napless, shabby-genteel look, and he wore light, cheap shoes, with the trousers firmly strapped down, probably to hide the complexion of his stockings. There was still a sort of jaunty air in the neat tie of his miserable calico neckerchief (without shirt-collar) and in the arrangement of his hair, which, though grizzled, curled beautifully. His features were thin, and marked with deep furrows. His nose (a drunkard's) was filled with snuff of the commonest description, and his eye had a strange, glistening, watery brilliancy, and appeared not to travel, but dart, from one object to

another. His behaviour to us—the doctor, myself, and the other pupils—was respectful and unobtrusive, displaying confidence without impertinence, and a grateful humility devoid of all appearance of cringing. He was, he told us, by profession, a teacher of elocution.

When the pupils had left, after the business of the day was over, I called the attention of the doctor, as, preparatory to sallying out, he warmed his hands at the dispensary fire, to this individual, who had just taken his medicine and gone away.

“That,” said he in reply, “is a fellow that made considerable noise in this place when I was a student. It was in the palmy days of the great heroes of the sock and buskin, Kean, Mathews, &c., and acting was all the rage. This young man evinced a very decided taste for the drama, and was tolerably successful, but, being rated far beyond his merits, very soon came to his level. Some great actor condescended to patronise him, and procured him an engagement in London, where he showed his breeding by grossly insulting his audience, and was kicked out by the actors, nor ever afterwards dared show his face in a metropolitan theatre. He was imprisoned for some time for debt,

and on his liberation disappeared from notice till about four years ago, when he made his *début* here again as a star, performing high tragedy parts, under the title of ‘Mr. Merrick, of the Theatres Royal Drury Lane and Covent Garden.’ It did not last above three or four nights, for here too he made his appearance in a state of intoxication, and was hissed from the stage. Since then, I believe, he has eked out a precarious subsistence by spouting at taverns and concert meetings, and teaching, though from his nauseous habits he is only patronised by the lowest class of clerks and shopmen of the town. I believe, however, the man has genius, and might have made a tolerable second-rate player, had he not acquired a ruinous propensity to drunkenness and low life, usually shining in such circumstances as the cock of the company.”

Now I had always been a character-fancier, and here was indeed a rare specimen. I resolved to scrape an acquaintance with this strange subject at whatever cost, as I was certain that an intercourse with him would suggest many ideas of a fresh and original description, besides much entertainment and food for study and reflection, to a mind constituted like mine; consequently I took every opportunity of showing him

kindness and respect ; and one day, when he appeared rather lower in health than usual, asked him to stay a little after the departure of the surgeon and pupils, and enjoy the comfort of a cushioned seat and the dispensary fire, as he was thinly clad, and the weather very cold and wet. He appeared affected by this, and in gratitude seemed desirous of amusing me by his conversation, which was certainly of a very superior order.

He used the written, not the spoken language of England, and displayed a most extensive and varied information on all literary and dramatic topics, at the same time favouring me with sketches and anecdotes of the persons and conversations of several great spirits, of whom I could only form a vague and distant idea from their reputation or their works.

About three days after this he came again, and, lingering behind the rest as I was folding up and putting away the books, papers, and instruments, seemed inclined once more to enter into conversation. Though still very despondent, he appeared in better health than he had hitherto been, and I congratulated him.

“ Oh, doctor,” said he, “ it’s all bootless. Here—here” (beating his knuckles against his forehead)

“here lies the seat of the disorder!” And, jumping to the middle of the room, he commenced, in regular theatrical style—

“Cure me of that.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff’d bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?”

“Oh, Shakspeare, Shakspeare! thou angel whom I still have served—”

Here, observing me watch him intently, he broke off in the middle of his rhapsody, and, blushing deeply, took up his hat, passed his palm round the whitened edge of the napless crown, and with a hurried stage-bow made his exit.

Thereupon an idea struck me—I had all along fancied I had seen him before—the doubts I entertained were of the man, but I was now sure of the *acting*. But here let me begin a new paragraph.

At this time a troop of strolling players, taking advantage of the poverty of the Royal Theatre in talent, had erected an immense wooden and canvass booth in one of the public places of A—z, fitted up in

all respects as a playhouse, only very squalid and miserable ; nevertheless, adorned with a gaudy exterior, and bearing, painted over it, “The Royal Coronation Pavilion,” or some other such sounding and senseless title.

This place used to be densely crowded nightly—for what reason I could not comprehend till I went there—and that by the lowest classes of the population. But one evening, urged by the spirit of adventure, I paid my threepence (the price of admission to the *pit* !), and, pulling the collar of my pea-jacket up to my eyes, and the shade of my cap over them, entered, and leant against the frail wall of the “pavilion,” awaiting the curtain’s rise in the midst of as precious a pack of rascallions as ever patronised the drama, or hustled an honest man.

Judge of my surprise and delight at witnessing a very tolerable abridgment of Lee’s tragedy of “Alexander the Great,” performed in a style as much superior to that of the patent theatre as one could suppose the productions of a starving, poor-devil author to those of a literary duke. The man that played *Alexander* particularly struck me—indeed riveted my attention.

Him it was I now recognised in my patient. But it was not till long after that I gathered so much of his history as to be able to put together the events of the foregoing tale.

On his next visit I mentioned to him that I had seen him play. He looked confused, and asked “Where?”

I told him, and with a pitiful laugh he confessed it. I then entered into a highly favourable criticism on his style of acting, which was certainly equal to anything I had up to that period seen. He was pleased, and immediately commenced to me an analysis and comparison of the playing of Kean, Young, young Kean, Macready, Wallack, and other modern actors. One sentence will give an idea of this.

“But of them all,” continued he, “Kean stands alone as the sun among the planets. Some come near him, and partake of his warmth and brightness—as his son, who is yet but in the proportion of Mercurius to the orb himself. Others are distant, pale, and frigid—as Macready, and his imitators, who form the Uranus and his satellites of this new system of theatrical *starring*. If I were desired to name the greatest geniuses of my time, I would enrol Bonaparte,

Pitt, Byron, Brougham, and Kean—the warrior, statesman, poet, orator, and actor !”

These sentences, which have dwelt unaltered on my memory, will give a notion of the man, his thoughts, and language.

In concluding, he told me that, if I could relish the study of character under very peculiar modifying circumstances, I should come to the stage-door of the booth any evening, and he would be most happy to introduce me to his fellow-strollers, whom I should discover to be a very different sort of people from what I had preconceived. That very evening I presented myself at the place, and, being immediately admitted, found myself in a situation of certainly a novel nature.

After being introduced to the various members of the troop, I took up my station close to the prompter's desk (a piece of rough-sawn plank), and looked past the edge of the scanty curtain upon the sea of heads outside, whose murmuring filled my ears loudly as the dash of waves.

The play was to be the “Iron Chest,” and we only waited the arrival of *Sir Edward Mortimer* to begin. At length, in he rushed, quite intoxicated. Nevertheless, as he was a chief attraction, he was hurriedly

dressed behind a large spare scene which enclosed a corner by way of tiring-room, and forthwith thrust upon the stage to perform.

The exhibition was most humiliating. The audience—such as it was—shrieked, hissed, and execrated, and, throwing stones, sticks, and turf upon the stage, would not suffer it to go on. Upon this the manager of the concern, a fellow of Herculean proportions, caught his tragedian off, and dashed him down upon a large property-chest, where he immediately fell into a deep slumber. Then going on himself, he played the part out in a dress in which, as a countryman, he was to sing “Cherry-cheek’d Patty” between the pieces.

Disgusted, I was about to withdraw as soon as the fall of the curtain allowed me to cross the stage to the door, but I was stopped by the manager.

“I beg your pardon, young doctor,” said he, “you have come to see Frank play. He has rather too much in him just now; but if you will wait till next *house*,* I can promise you will hear thunder, and no

* Strollers usually perform the same pieces twice or thrice over in one evening—each time the barn or booth is filled it is called “a house;” and they may be heard talking of two houses of five pounds each, and one of three pounds, or such a value. This note is for the benefit of the uninitiated.

mistake. A glass of *hot-with* will by that time just bring him bang up to the mark."

Judging it would be most prudent and safe, under the circumstances, to conceal my feelings and acquiesce, I remained, and amused myself between the "houses" by conversing with the different members of the troop. I found them to be a curious, well-informed, witty, dissipated, careless—I was going to write abandoned—set, but that would be much stronger than the truth.

The leading comedian was just such another as Merrick. He was a Scotchman, and had been a favourite at the metropolitan and provincial theatres of that country, but liquor had been his bane, and made him what he now was.

At length the immense booth was emptied, and again refilled to overflowing, and it was time the curtain should rise.

Thereupon the manager, compounding a strong glass of hot gin-and-water, roused up his tragedy hero, and administered the potion. The effect was electrical. Immediately he came up to me, took my hand, addressed me with perfect politeness (ay, that he did, though you may grin), then went upon the stage, and played the character of *Sir Edward* in a more

masterly manner than I had ever seen it done before or have since.

I was much pleased—the spectators were in raptures—and Merrick, his eye lighted up by the embers of his expiring, and all but extinct genius, appeared to exult with all the pride of conscious merit in the applause of even such an audience.

After the performance of “Luke the Labourer,” with which the entertainments concluded, we all adjourned to a neighbouring tavern, and finished the evening as none but a student of medicine could, and even he in no other society save that of ruined but not despairing actors.

About three or four days after this Merrick again made his appearance at the dispensary, but in a most deplorable state. His arm, from the shoulder down, was one mass of that inflammation called St. Anthony’s fire. By the surgeon’s desire, I proceeded to question him, with the view to elucidate how he had come by this. After he had answered some of my interrogations, I asked,—

“You have been exposed to cold and wet, have you not?”

“Yes.”

“ And the night-air ? ”

“ Yes ; I lay in the open air last night.”

“ What—in the rain ? ”

“ Did it rain ?—*I was not aware of that.* ”

“ Were you in liquor—on your word now, Mr. Merrick ? ”

“ *On my honour—no ! It was the first time I have been really sober for years.* ”

“ And where did you lie out in such a night, if I may ask ? ”

“ *In Saint Philip’s churchyard !* ” And, turning pale, he trembled.

The reader, aware of circumstances I did not then know, will here look backward in the tale.

We had him immediately taken into the hospital, and only preserved his life by extensive incisions into the diseased limb. He was delirious for some time, during which he continued to rave vague, unconnected passages from plays and poems ; but at length he got so far convalescent as to be able to leave the hospital for a day—a liberty he urgently begged.

He did not return in the evening, but about four days after was brought back by his brother strollers, raving with the disease denominated *delirium tremens*.

After having been so long kept by the discipline of the hospital from liquor, his craving for the accustomed stimulus had become unendurable, and he had quenched it with one uninterrupted debauch, the result of which was the state he was now in.

The reader is not probably aware that the chief characteristics of this disease are spectral illusions and inability to sleep—the latter the most important, seeing that, as soon as sleep has been induced, the patient's life may in general be considered safe.

We therefore had him bestowed in a small ward that had been built behind one of the large ones, into which it opened. This was known by the name of the Back-Ward, and, at the time indicated, was untenanted—silent and solitary. A strait-jacket was laced upon him, a fire kindled to warm the place, and, after the administration of certain remedies, he was left, a nurse being appointed to sit by and watch him.

About ten o'clock that night I entered the outer ward. Here I found the nurse sitting beside her sister official, chatting by the fire. He was, consequently, unattended.

Going at once into the Back-Ward, an incident befel me which is one of the very few I have ex-

perienced approaching in a degree to the supernatural.

You have remarked, reader, that on going into a room, especially a half-darkened one, where already there is another individual, you have a vague, indefinable impression that there is somebody there—a perception almost of his presence—before his figure meets your eye, or the sound of his breathing or movement reaches your ear. A mesmerist I knew said that this resulted from an equalization of the magnetic fluid between the bodies of yourself and the other individual. Be that as it may, I must confess I have frequently experienced the phenomenon of having an internal feeling of the vicinity of a person to me whom my senses had not yet perceived. I do not say that this presentiment always occurs, but that it sometimes, nay, often happens, though it is possible that only people of peculiar turns of thought may observe it.

Now, on entering this Back-Ward, which was a very extensive, lofty-roofed apartment, lighted only by the fire and a single lamp suspended from the centre of the ceiling, I had this unaccountable notion—I *felt* that there was some third individual there, besides Merrick and myself. So strong was the idea, that I had an

angry word on my tongue for whomsoever it might be that was thus allowed, by the negligence of the nurse, to intrude upon my patient. But to my surprise, on the instant that I looked rightly round, there was really no being there save him and myself. Thereupon came over me that peculiar feeling for which there is no word in English, but which the Scotch express by the term “eeriness.” This, however, was increased to actual terror when the patient said, quite calmly and unconcernedly,—

“You need not go, Lily,—’tis only my friend, young Doctor D——, an excellent judge of acting, and gifted with a thorough taste for the beauties of our great favourite of old—”

All this while he was staring into the empty air behind me; then, turning to me, he said with a wan smile,—

“Ah, she will go. Poor thing! she was always so shy. Hark!—her little one’s tiny mournful cry as she carries it away through that outer place there, but that will not much trouble her—her heart is fixed so firmly on another object. It’s a pity she has left, but I shall see her *to-night at the Woodlands*.”

I confess I trembled with awe and superstitious

dread—my hair stood up—I felt cold and weak. Nevertheless, I proceeded to administer the medicine which had been the occasion of my visit, and which was a preparation of opium applied in a way unintelligible to the general reader. Yet I could not consider myself safe till, emerging hurriedly into the main ward, I saw the patients slumbering around, with the two crones of nurses murmuring by the fire.

But it was not to end thus. About midnight, one of these women rushed into my apartment in the hospital, and informed me that Merrick had burst from his strait-jacket, and, having made his way into the main ward, was there play-acting, to the surprise and affright of the other patients. I hastily donned some clothes, and, going to the place, found the house-surgeon, who had been called before me, already there.

He was standing regarding, from a safe distance, our patient, who, attired in the dress of the house, and with his strait-jacket fantastically disposed around him in the manner of a theatrical costume, was moving rapidly, but with tottering, about the floor, reciting a medley of disjointed passages from different plays.

All around the large, dimly-lighted hall, the patients, in their strange-looking white dresses and

cowls, sat up in their beds, which most of them were unable to get away from, on account of broken limbs or other injuries, their pallid faces expressing wonder and dismay at the singular and startling scene that was enacting before them.

Merrick appeared very weak ; he staggered every now and then, and his voice faltered, but his eye was brilliant with an unnatural fire, as he went on declaiming—

“ The wounds that pain’d—the wounds that murder’d me,
Were given before. I was already dead.
This only marks my body for the grave.*

Oh my fair star, I shall be shortly with thee.
What means this deadly dew upon my forehead ?
My heart, too, heaves—†

Oh thou, my love, my wife !
Death, that hath suck’d the honey of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.‡

Soft you ! a word or two before you go.
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am—nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice : then must you speak
Of one not easily jealous, but whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away

* “ Revenge.”

† “ Alexander the Great.”

‡ “ Romeo and Juliet.”

Richer than all his tribe—of one whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum.” *

He fell to the floor.

The rest is silence !†

“Very well acted, Mr. Merrick,” said the house-surgeon as we caught his hands ; “having played out your part, you had better go to bed now. Bless me, he is asleep already !”

“Yes,” said I, “he sleeps well after life’s fitful fever.—He is dead !”

* “Othello.”

† “Hamlet.”

CHAPTER X.



AN EXCURSION WITH BOB WHYTE.

“I CANNOT conceive a more deluding error,” said Bob Whyte, a fellow-student, “than to imagine that a man, because he is devoted to pursuits of science or philosophy (for you must be aware that it is now generally considered desirable to attach different meanings to these two words—understanding the first to include all investigation of the properties of matter—using the second to designate all inquiry into mental phenomena), —I cannot conceive,” he continued, “a more palpable blunder than to fancy that a man, because he is even enthusiastically given to such subjects, must be therefore a cold, grave, abstracted being, unwitting of the creature-comforts of this life—who revels not in the

sunburst of woman's eye, nor cares by a luting* of lips to inhale into his system her dew-beladen breath, the gaseous sublimate (to indulge in a chemical metaphor) of her gentle being—ungifted with an eye to look with Byron's on Mount Jura—unennobled with a mouth to expand withal into a guffaw at Hood's last and brightest.

“The tree of knowledge was surely not a thorn-tree—no, it bloomed in the midst of a garden, and bore fruit so luscious as to tempt to the first and greatest of all rebellions! So is it still—so should it be. To shroud the beauty of the bright goddess, STUDY, under a pall of melancholy gloom—a forbidding curtain of dust and cobwebs—is as bad as to hang the ascetic veil before the sweet smile of the Madonna, Religion.

“For instance,—now here are you and I, Grim (to me, the Medical Student, briefly and affectionately), who flatter ourselves we are up to a wrinkle or two on some rather abstruse points. Prithee, who broke his

* When the open extremities of two tubes are brought together, and united by some intermediate moist substance, so that any vapour or gas may pass through without contamination from the external air, this is called, in the language of the Laboratory, “*luting*.”

collar-bone at football t'other day? Who fished Lord What's-his-name's trout-streams, and he never the wiser? Who was drunk o' Wednesday? Who was caught—"

"No more of that, Bob, if you love me; get on with the affair you are at."

Now this affair was the manufacture, with a blow-pipe and spirit-lamp, of a curious little bit of glass apparatus, which he intended to use in exhibiting to the Soandsonian Scientific Society, a new method he had hit upon of making the salts of manganese.

We were seated together in the workshop attached to the magnificent apparatus-room in the ancient University of Soandso. Before us was a snug little furnace, surmounted by a sandbath; on one side a turning-lathe, on the other a model system of pulleys. Under a table in a corner had been shoved a large plate electrical machine out of repair; while on shelves and racks all around the place bristled every description of tools and utensils, chemical and mechanical. Hard by was the apparatus-room itself, a large elongated apartment, crowded with air-pumps, model steam-engines, globes, prisms, telescopes, microscopes, kaleidoscopes, and all other kinds of scopes (the scope

of Bacon, by Professor Napier, excepted), magnets, pneumatic troughs, friction-wheels, Leyden jars, and fac-similes of strange machinery for every purpose, from raising a sunk seventy-four to punching the slit of a steel-pen.

Lord of all this domain was Bob Whyte, my fellow-student and chum. He held the office of Conservator of the Scientific Apparatus to the University, and Assistant to the Professor of Natural Philosophy, with a tolerable income considering, and admirable facilities of acquiring knowledge ; and certainly he made the most of both.

Oh, dear old Soandsonian University, dearer apparatus-room, and dearest little workshop—dear in yourselves, but how much more on account of him who was, for a period, the most intimate of my intimates—my mentor, my protector, guide, philosopher, and friend—him whose every joke conveyed instruction—whose very fun was philosophical—who loved me with an indulgent and enduring affection—between whom and myself there now flow some thousand miles of salt water !

Bob was, however, studying medicine with a view to the profession, and had been for some years. He had

nearly completed his term, but was in no hurry, for his salary came well up to his wants ; and, as far as study went, the noble library, apparatus, and all other resources of the university were at his command.

His age was about twenty-four years (my own, at the period I allude to, being seventeen), and he was of habits at once studious and frolicsome, attentive to everything around, and yet apparently regardless of anything. At one time he would give you a simple and succinct analysis of Adam Smith's celebrated "Theory of Moral Sentiments," which, he would tell you he considered the standard of systematic morality ; next minute he would be proposing a "night of it" at the sign of the Boot. Anon he would explain that the proper and scientific way of compounding punch was to pour in the spirits last of all, as the alcohol materially interfered with the perfect solution of sugar in water.

A fellow of most excellent humour was he—the warmest in feeling, and of a spirit devoted to all sorts of merriment ;—

But the heart that is soonest awake to the flowers
Is always the first to be touch'd by the thorns ;

and there were moments when my boyish heart was

melting to sorrow as he spoke, with a deep but manly pathos, of bitter disappointments in love and in prospects—of difficulties hard to be surmounted—of hopes long protracted—poverty—and, of all the most galling, the scorn of the unworthy.

I have rarely known such a bright genius as Bob's. With the principles of nearly every science he was familiar, especially such as are usually treated of in a course of what is called natural philosophy, or of chemistry. These sciences were his living—by them he earned his bread, and of course he knew them as a workman does his trade. A most retentive memory he possessed, which, like a pool of water, received and retained everything that fell upon its surface, whether of the metallic gravity of philosophic truth, or the snow-flake lightness of mere ornamental elegance.

Whatever treatise he read, his mind at once absorbed, letting no fact escape ; whatever process of manufacture he saw, he forthwith remembered, and could explain throughout the complications of each progressive step. In conversation with him, you would think him a walking encyclopedia, were it not for the continual bursts of fun, scintillations of bright wit, or flashes of poetic feeling that irradiated all his presence. The

pursuit of knowledge, with him for a companion or a guide, became anything but

Harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose.

Nay, rather, as Milton continues,

Musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

He was a most muscular subject, Bob, moreover ; and had given not a little attention (amongst other sciences) to the theory of pugilism and single-stick. But his exterior was the worst of him ; he was short in stature, and of no particular beauty of countenance save in as far as went a general expression of infinite good-humour, and an eye (a splendid hazel one) actually glistening with glee.

By the by, there was a curious property connected with this eye of Bob's. If he happened to glance or wink it at any young woman passing, she would immediately start into a perfectly erect gait, and brush the soles of her shoes smartly along the pavement for the next half-a-dozen steps or so. I could never account for this most uniform and remarkable result. I asked an explanation from himself once. He said it was a *psychological phenomenon*.

Such was the companion that sat with me in the little workshop.

Just as we were speaking, the door was opened, and in stepped our most worthy professor of natural philosophy—known among ourselves by the endearing abbreviation of “the Proff.” He had come to enjoy in seclusion the quiet luxury of a pipe, and the relaxation of an hour’s confab, without restraint, with his assistant and pupil.

We immediately stood up, but, being most affably desired to be on no ceremony, reseated ourselves, and resumed our several proceedings, and a conversation ensued, broken by frequent cachinnations on the part of the professor.

When this began to take somewhat of a scientific turn,—

“I have heard,” said the Proff, “from several sources, that the northern vicinity of Soandso affords a very rich and interesting field for geological and mineralogical study, and that some valuable specimens of either description are to be found in the neighbourhood of the village of Drittenbreeks, on the banks of the little river Dritten.”

“That was where our ingenious friend, Mr. Coal

Hunter, found his *fossil cow*, was it not? A most appropriate result to geological ruminations!"

"Yes, and, as the weather is beautiful, I do not see why you should not go out some Saturday with the view to an investigation. You can make a regular scientific excursion of it, and try if you can't collect a few tolerable specimens for lecture. We are sadly in want of some, let me tell you. The distance, moreover, is but a joke to a young chap like you—eight or nine miles only, by the footpath across the hills."

"I most cordially embrace the proposal," cried Bob. "I will be off on Saturday first; the day after to-morrow, is n't it?" (turning to me—I assented). "And you shall go with me, Grim. My eyes! won't we make a day of it? An excursion, geological, mineralogical, and general funological! Such an excursion is right after my own heart. I have long entertained the notion, and if it don't afford me some entertainment in return there is no such thing as gratitude left in human ideas."

"Yes, and as you are botanical," continued the professor, "(though I can't say I care much for the science myself,) this is just the very season for you—

and the very weather—and for entomology, too, if you have given any attention to it.”

“ Oh, haven’t I? I have studied it with some interest, I promise you.”

“ Bless me, your acquirements are endless! What charm could this study have for a Medical Student?”

“ The greatest of all—to render him *fly*, to be sure.”

“ Mr. Whyte, Mr. Whyte, take care.”

Upon this the sage drew forth his pipe from a recess behind the furnace, lighted it, and, drawing his chair close to the fender, was speedily lost in the mazy depths of some Archimedean problem, which I sincerely hope he smoked his way to the bottom of; while Bob and I, entering into eager discourse, began to lay the plan of our intended excursion.

But first we agreed that, as soon as the professor withdrew, the porter of the rooms should be despatched for a supply of that singular and anomalous fluid which has been denominated Edinburgh Yill—the investigation of whose constitution and qualities I would beg here earnestly to recommend to the scientific reader, convinced as I am that an inquiry, instituted and carried out on the principles of the inductive or ex-

perimental philosophy, would be rewarded by the most overwhelming results.

Next day, towards evening, two original-looking youths were seen (by those who had nothing better to do than look at them) meandering arm-in-arm through the streets of Soandso, wending rather a zigzag way towards a certain thoroughfare, whose unusual width was narrowed to a lane by immense battalions of old bedsteads, cupboards, grates, sign-boards, chests of drawers, rickety tables, and mirrors of misanthropic tendencies—that is, if one might judge from the unnatural reflections they cast upon the honest folks around.

Long did they trace their devious course through this maze, now knocking their shins against a second-hand cradle, anon startled by the apparition of a ready-made coffin, with such an alarming announcement as—“Deaths undertaken on the shortest notice.” It was ourselves—Bob Whyte and his inseparable adherent, Grim, whose pen is now tracing these lines.

Well, up and down we wandered, till at length we stumbled on the identical article of which we were in search—viz. a square wooden box of portable dimensions, with a padlock and key, and a broad leathern

strap attached, whereby it might be slung across the shoulders—a pedler's case, in short. This valuable object we secured by immediate purchase, and bore it away rejoicing.

On the succeeding morning, Saturday, June 22nd (I am particular in dates, having been up the Levant, where they grow, since then), we met at an hour when the widow Night, putting away her sables, was going into half-mourning—excuse me, reader—we met in the apparatus-room of the university, and arranged our accoutrements previously to sallying forth.

When fully equipped, I contemplated Bob. His broad muscular shoulders were cased in a middle-aged velveteen shooting-jacket; other clothes of the lightest woollen-stuff completed his apparel, and slanting on the curly pate of the fellow was perched a broad-brimmed white beaver, of a most knowing cut. Across his back was slung the box, and his right hand grasped a cudgel, of whose dimensions the club of Hercules may give an idea correct enough for all general purposes.

This stick, which Bob had christened his “Jacobin Club,” from its levelling propensities, was of weight enormous, and hirsute with knotty spines. Upon its

frowning head were certain spots (not stains!) which he averred were received when it had formed his errant sire's cicerone once at Donnybrook. In a generous fit one day he presented it to me; but when he went away across the sea I restored it to him, telling him that, as he was going among strangers, he might possibly find it a useful friend in opening his way among the heads of society in his adopted land.

The box at his back contained a telescope, a geologist's hammer, a box of chalks for drawing, a book of blotting-paper for preserving flowers, a tin receptacle for insects, Hooker's "British Flora" (latest edition, containing the cryptogamia), and a soda-water bottle, filled to the stopper with genuine Farintosh, the mere aroma of which made your soul feel that the Arabian alchemists, who in seeking for gold discovered alcohol, had no cause to grumble at the alternative.

For me, a boy's blue dress was my fit-out, and on my back, in vain emulation of Bob, I bore a student's japanned case of tin, whose contents, though scarcely botanical, were still of a floury description, consisting of numerous hot rolls, whose scooped interiors afforded room in each for a rich stratum of ham—in short, a kind of half-natural sandwiches.

Having ascertained that we were all right, we left the apparatus-room, and, giving the key in charge to the porter, emerged into the street, and marched along to the sound of a lively air, which Bob whistled with admirable precision and effect.

As we went, happening to pass several edifices in Grecian taste, we forthwith began to discuss the subject of architecture.

“I am glad to think,” said Bob, “I am glad to see it daily more evident, that the strange and most questionable taste of valuing everything that is ancient in literature or art is on the decline—in fact, about speedily to go out altogether. I am not aware of any humbug that has so long withstood the march of sovereign common sense as this. A man that can grope through two dead languages is even yet held in more honour than one that can walk over Europe without an interpreter, while our ears are dinned and our eyes blinded with affectation about the sublimity of the Greek tragedies, the wisdom of old heathen philosophers, or the astounding eloquence of Roman orators, and at the same time ten to one but the honest folks that are so *havering* in speech and on paper are altogether unacquainted with what they are ranting about,

unless perchance by means of a translation by some clever modern, many times superior to the old original."

I endeavoured to combat this sweeping criticism, but Bob would only agree with me on one point.

"Yes," said he, "their architecture is indeed worthy of all the praise it gets, and more than can be given to it. The Greek temples must have been perfection; but they do not so much excite my admiration as the stupendous remains of the more olden eras—the temples and pyramids on the banks of the great river of Egypt. Now the temples—and most noble they are—raise my wonder, and all that, but all is in a measure plain and above-board with regard to them, and there is pleasure interwoven with the astonishment. But then these pyramids—there hangs around them a kind of magnificent mysterious obscurity—a strange, vague, indefinable, semi-supernatural sublimity, different from that which clothes any other earthly object. There they are, but how, when, by whom, or for what purpose they were placed there, who can shew? Many a long rigmarole have I read of them, and many a history and many a use have I seen ascribed to them, but all is uncertainty—hardly deserving the name of hypo-

thesis. I have seen them proved to be tombs, treasures, observatories, altars, gnomons of mighty sundials, penetralia for superstitious mysteries, and, quaintest of all, images of Mount Ararat, standing amid the inundations of the river, as it stood among the waters of the Deluge, and erected to be worshipped as types of the Saviour mountain, the tale of which, marred by tradition, had thus descended to the sons of Ham. Now I would but add another opinion to the list to render the puzzle complete—it is, that they are monuments set up whereby to remember great epochs. It is and has been the custom of men, in all places and at all times, to mark important events by the setting up of stones, single or in heaps, rude or highly wrought, according to the state of civilization. Now I would suggest that one of these may have commemorated the expulsion of the Pales Hycsos—shepherd-kings, or whatever other name chronologists may have gone to loggerheads about them by; another might have—”

“Stop,” cried I; “if you are going on at that rate I can give you another explanation, about as probable, and certainly more original—viz. that they were just rough heaps of stones piled up in a geometrical figure

(the Egyptians doing everything on such principles), to be at hand when wanted for useful purposes, such as the erection of temples, fortifications, &c., the same as piles of made bricks in a clay-field. You are well aware that there were no quarries in the valley of the Nile, and to think that the material was brought stone by stone from the mountains, as buildings were in the process of being raised, is absurd. Another fact I could bring in support of my hypothesis is the insignificance of the chambers they contain, compared with the bulk of the piles themselves, of whose builders the sole object seems to have been the heaping together of the greatest possible quantity of stone in the smallest possible space and safest possible figure.”

“Bah!” interjected Bob.

Thus conversing we padded along, while the rising sun poured around us all the glorious freshness and fragrance of a midsummer morning. Leaving behind us the scattered outskirts of the populous suburbs of Soandso, we marched northward along a road winding through cultivated fields and dense plantations, everything around rejoicing in the beauty of early day, and raising in our hearts a feeling of exhilaration like

that excited by the clear laugh of a youthful maiden's glee.

Now the path would ascend a gentle inclination, from the summit of which we could see a bright expanse of landscape stretching far before us and on either side, with the sinuous road winding through it, like a tangled piece of yellow tape, now hid behind a wood-crowned eminence, now lost amid a spreading flood of deep green foliage, far and widely inundating the noble prospect; scattered also over which were to be caught frequent glimpses of skiey water, which the eye delighted to puzzle itself withal, endeavouring to trace them into a river or lengthened lake; while in the front distance upsprang before the view the lofty hills, the object of our travel, steeped in a rich and vapoury aërial tint, that varied in its warmth from the deepest blue to the lightest and most heavenly rosiness.

Then, as we descended the acclivity, while this bright scene seemed to sink from the sight around us, we would have haply on one side the way a hay-field, with the farm-people, male and female, crowding jocund at their early labour, and laughing and talking loudly as they turned and tedded the odorous grass.

Anon, when we reached the bottom of the hollow, a streamlet would salute us, rattling cheerily between and under its bosky banks, dipping suddenly beneath the road, then popping its noisy prattle out at the other side, and running merrily away, like a pretty child playing at bo-peep with you.

Nay, the very air thrilled with the clear melody of birds about and over us, and once from out a thick green wood, about two fields off or so, a dulcet music came floating to our ears, which Bob, standing still in a rapture, averred, upon his credit, to be that of the nightingale, Heaven's own high chorister.

Presently, as we walked on, our eyes would be attracted to the sombre pinnacles of some dusky old ruin, the castle erst of grim baron or gallant knight, rising majestically dark from out the deep green foliage that surrounded it; and half a mile farther we would come to a princely modern mansion, with pillared gateway and sweeping avenue, far up which could be spied a man walking with a gun in his hand and a couple of dogs at his heels—the gamekeeper on his morning rounds.

All was brightness, warmth, freshness, and promise, and as we marched along we ceased to talk, and

whistled and sang, in very lightness of heart. Farther and farther as the morning advanced into day, the highway became thronged with country folks, young men and maidens crowding into the town, for it was a great corn and cattle market-day; their quaint dresses contrasting strangely in cut and texture with what we had been used to see worn by townspeople. Frequent herds of cattle and flocks of sheep passed us, and carts, cars, and waggons, and now and then a group of young horses, prancing along with their ears flaunting with gay ribbons.

But when we had travelled thus for two or three hours, stopping frequently to admire points of view, to chat with young country-girls tripping lightly to the fair, to sketch a cottage near a wood, or to smoke a cheroot under a green tree, at length our stomachs (admirable chronometers!) began to indicate the hour for breakfast. The first symptom of this came from my companion, who solemnly declared that the vacuum of Torricelli was a joke to what existed in his interior, and that though the former, in some opinions, might be actually filled with the vapour of water or of mercury, yet the latter, in his own opinion, required a supply of a decidedly more stimulating description.

To this I replied by proposing an immediate attack upon the contents of my plant-case. This was negatived by my friend, whose idea was that we should retire from the public path, and in some sequestered spot enjoy the luxury of a rustic breakfast, with a rest at the same time. With this view he was about to lead the way up a beautiful green lane, when suddenly our attention was attracted to a figure which, rounding a turn in the road a short way in advance, came into view, moving swiftly toward us.

It was a slight but very well-made young man, in age apparently a little beyond twenty years. He wore a short, round coat, of what had once been green corduroy, a waistcoat of a thick, heavy shawl stuff, very brilliant in its pattern, but somewhat frayed and buttonless, yet clean. It was open, exposing a shirt of a blue check, round which a Turkey-red cotton handkerchief had been tied by way of neckcloth. His other garments were of that kind a thin pair of which, when in company with a light heart, is wisely said to have an amazing facility in going through the world (brave boys). To one side of his head drooped gracefully a glazed cap, glistening in the sunbeams, and over his shoulder he bore a long sword, with an old

leather hat-box dangling from its point behind him. The fellow, like all other vagabonds, had curled hair and a good-humoured face, and came along whistling loudly and clearly the air from "Fra Diavolo," "On yonder rock reclining."

As he came up, Bob accosted this remarkable specimen with—

"Would you sell your whistle, comrade?"

"No, but I should like to wet it, if it's all the same to you," was the reply.

"You shall wet it, and whet your appetite too," cried Bob. "Come with us; we are just going out of the way to enjoy a quiet breakfast; come and share it—you are most welcome. Never fear, there's lots of prog!"

"Why, for that matter, gentlemen," quoth he, "I have myself some slices of cold corned beef, half a loaf, two hard-boiled eggs, and a flask of gin, and with your leave I shall be glad to join you. More than that, I have some niggerhead, a short pipe, and a gun-flint and a bit of steel in my pockets, for a light."

"Never mind," said Bob, as we moved up the lane together; "my young friend there carries a lens of

singularly concentrative power, one of old Dolland's ; and if that fail I have in my pocket a phial of Nordhausen sulphuric acid that would burn Beelzebub's eye out."

We might have gone a couple of hundred yards up the lane, rounding two turnings in the way, when we came to a high old Gothic arch, spanning a small stream. This came down through a scooped channel, the sides of which were plentifully overhung with birches and willows, with abundance of bushes and red-berried mountain ashes intermingled. Nevertheless, along the sunny side of the water there ran a long rounded stripe of most vivid green sward, with a narrow edging of white pebbles.

We were at once unanimous in selecting this spot as the scene of our repast ; and so, one after the other, jumping over the corner of the bridge, we found our way to the bank, over sweeter than which Titania herself never led the revels.

I was the first down, being the lightest of the three ; but the moment my foot touched the sward I stood fixed, whilst escaped me the half-smothered exclamation, "Dorothea washing her feet !" for my thoughts were flown with on the instant to a scene in that most

witching of romances, the adventures of the dear old Don of La Mancha.

It was a beautiful young damsel that I saw, and she sat on the grass by the water's edge, with one foot on her opposite knee, whereat she appeared to be gazing most earnestly and pitifully, unconscious of our vicinity. Her thick chestnut hair fell loosely over her shoulders, for it had never been humbugged with oil or any other cosmetic, and her little cottage straw bonnet lay on the grass beside her, a thing unwonted to her, the virgin snood of blue satin ribbon being her usual head-dress. Her face was most singularly sweet and simple, her figure light and girlish, and her whole aspect expressive of innocence, youth, prettiness, and rusticity.

As soon as she saw us she sprang up, and, with her face sweetly red as a robin's bosom, stood gazing at us, balancing herself on her heel, and trembling violently.

"Bless me!" cried my friend, "she has a thorn in her foot;" and, stepping gently forward, he took from his waistcoat-pocket a pigmy case of surgical instruments (the manufacture of his own hands, for Bob had a genius), and, himself blushing a little, offered his aid.

The girl, apparently not knowing what better to do, allowed him, and in a trice he had extracted the obnoxious thorn, and with a little bit of lint, and a tiny strap of lead plaster, dressed the puncture, so as almost entirely to remove the pain. Thereupon, her colour flushing and paling, a smile of bashful pleasure filled her countenance at the relief she experienced, though her modesty could not in words express the gratitude she felt. But Bob, lifting from the grass her shawl of dark-coloured tartan, threw it upon her shoulders, and, while she hurriedly clubbed up her hair behind, took her bonnet, and, going round in front, drew it upon her head, and, as he moved it this way and that way, to make it sit prettily, there echoed under the arch, and all among the rocks, trees, and bushes, a sound which those skilled in wood-notes wild would infallibly have pronounced to be a smack. Upon this, the creature sprang from us, and ran lightly up the bank. But she paused upon the bridge, and, giving us one glance, probably to see if we were not looking the other way, bounded off like a startled fawn.

As she did, Bob knocked his heel to the ground with vehemence, and, dropping upon the grass, pulled

the bottle from his box, clapped it to his head, and remained for a while gazing fixedly up to heaven. Then it passed to me, and from me to the stranger, who, drawing from his pocket a little leathern cup, took a quantity which he tempered with water from the stream, for his stomach was a southern one, of a Yorkshire fabric, and not at all calculated for the geyser fluids of the far north.

Seating ourselves upon the grass, at a spot where the scattered foliage of a young willow afforded a kind of half-shade half-sunshine, we opened our several stores, and commenced upon proceedings, which I am certain would at once have convinced a materialist of the unstable nature of his theories with regard to the indestructibility of matter.

Whilst this went on, frequent were the jests, the quips, and cranks, that flew from each to each, nor was the laughter that resounded among the rocky ledges less clear and cheerful than the merry rush of the limpid waters near us.

But when we had concluded our repast, the properties of my lens were called into requisition, and, having procured a Promethean spark from the sun, I returned under the shade, where, communicating the fire to my

friend and the stranger, we reclined at length upon the bank, and forthwith began to fling into the air clouds of incense, fragrant as ever ascended before Diana's shrine, for I had in a pocket of my jacket a case of Manillas stuffed to the full; moreover, in the crown of my friend's hat was a brown-paper parcel containing as many more, of as rich a quality.

At length my comrade, taking the cheroot from his mouth, pointed with it to the bed of the stream, and remarked,—

“I remember a certain passage in *Æschylus*, I think, where he compares the muscles of a strong man in action to the rounded waterworn stones in the bed of a rivulet—a most happy and original simile, is it not?”

Upon my acquiescing in its aptness, our companion asked who was this Mr. What'soname.

“An old Grecian,” said Bob, “that my friend here and I have been intimate with; but we should not have mentioned him—probably you don't know about these things?”

“Oh, don't I? I should surmise it's not the first time I have tried it on. Look ye here.”

And, springing up, he threw his symmetrical though slender frame into certain violent but by no means un-

picturesque attitudes, which he informed us constituted the "Grecian Statues," as done by the first performers, beginning with "Ajax defying the lightning," and concluding with "the fighting and dying Gladiator in six positions."

All this, which he went through with an amusing jauntiness of demeanour, was highly entertaining to us, and we acknowledged, by mutually understood signs, that we had stumbled upon an original.

We thanked him for his display, and handed him another cheroot, when, throwing himself carelessly upon the sod, he entered with amazing spirit and volubility into a rambling conversation about all sorts of theatrical matters, in the course of which he displayed a singular freedom and communicativeness in talking of his own fortunes.

He had been a player from his infancy—from his birth, in fact, having come into the world behind the scenes, in a barn, during the performance of "The Devil to Pay" to a crowded and enthusiastic audience. Thereafter he had performed all kinds of parts, from the baby in the pantomime, and the child in "Pizarro," to *King Lear* and *Ali Pasha*—tragedy, comedy, farce, or melodrama, coming alike indifferently to him.

Moreover, he had practised as ventriloquist, rope-dancer, posturer, clown of a circus, tumbler, and Indian juggler, and the sword he bore with him had been swallowed into his stomach and brandished against the *Earl of Richmond* with equal frequency and effect.

We had all along felt a singular interest in him, he appeared so good-humoured, so regardless, so much a child of Providence. Never did I see one seemingly so well acquainted with the world, and yet so easy, unsuspecting, so blessed with animal spirits, and withal so unpresuming; and I began to feel a kind of regret that a few minutes would sever us, probably never to meet more.

Possibly similar feelings were passing through his mind; for, after a pensive silence of some duration, when we remarked that in this his checkered career he must have been a witness to many strange scenes, he came out abruptly, and without preface, with the following anecdote, which I here introduce as EPISODE No. I. of this my narration, christening it with a drop of ink by the title of

“THE EQUESTRIAN’S CHILD.”

“IT is about three years since I was engaged to play in an equestrian company. It was managed by a

Mr. Codoni, of Italian extraction, and of much respectability. For a short time previously I had been an ill-remunerated member of a country dramatic circuit, in which low comic parts had principally fallen to my lot. This person, taking a fancy to my powers in that way, made offer to me of the tempting salary of two guineas a-week to become clown to the ring in this exhibition. I must confess I had some qualms. The descent from the legitimate drama was sufficiently bitter to the feelings of a young actor, and I feared that for the future my pretensions to respectability would be *four-footed*, like those of my quadruped fellow-performers (I beg pardon, for I shan't err a second time)—but I put the affront into my pocket, and the two guineas into the opposite one; when, finding my equilibrium perfect, I at once deserted the boards and took to the sawdust—threw up the sock and buskin, and donned the cap and bells; and very excellent fooling I made, believe me.

“Mr. Codoni's establishment was a very superb one, in fact the most so of anything of the kind that ever existed in England, out of the metropolis. He travelled with it from one to another of the great provincial cities, erecting, where he could not have access to the

theatres, immense buildings of wood, which often in solidity and splendour seemed more calculated for permanent public structures than the mere portable fabrics of a season.

“The building I was engaged to play in was of this description, and I believe the largest he had ever erected. It was in an exceedingly populous and wealthy manufacturing town, and, as the support he met with was very liberal, he in return made every sacrifice to merit this, which the possession of a considerable capital, honestly accumulated in his profession, enabled him to do.

“The extent of ground the building occupied was very great, for, besides a large place for exhibition, it contained stables for a stud of fifty horses, dressing-rooms for biped and quadruped performers, saloons for the audience, and apartments for above a dozen servants connected with the concern, who lived constantly there.

“The circus itself, or place of exhibition, consisted of, first, the circle or arena, a large round space, about fifty feet in diameter, depressed toward the centre. From this stretched back on two sides wide tiers of seats for spectators, on a level with the open space for

some yards back, but, beyond that, ascending more and more, till the last touched the lofty roof. One of these divisions was named the gallery; the opposite one, which had the seats cushioned and backed, was called the pit. The other two sides were occupied each with a double row of boxes, pierced with two wide curtained entrances for the performers. The fronts of these boxes, as well as the various pillars and supports about the place, were ornamented with medallions and shields, having upon them armorial bearings and paintings, very well executed, of such subjects as ‘Mazeppa,’ horses in a storm, a horse attacked by a lion, &c., or perhaps portraits of celebrated racehorses or hunters. Several vases with flowers, standing on small ornamental shelves between, gave an air of taste to the place, much heightened by a profusion of little silken flags, disposed in hanging groups where they could not interfere with the view of the performances.

“The roof, which was slated, was very high, and concealed on the inside by a ceiling of striped silk of red and white, star-shaped, through the centre of which was suspended a very large gaselier, with a profusion of jets perfectly dazzling to the eye. The aspect of the place altogether was magnificent in the extreme,

and at the same time quite tasteful and in keeping; and you may well surmise that I soon got proud enough of my new line of life, and cocked my hat in the faces of my old fellow-strollers of the legitimate school, with an air sufficiently supercilious and self-gratulatory.

“But if the building was thus meriting all praise, not one whit less so was the company—a most numerous and well-appointed one, consisting altogether of at least a hundred individuals, several of them equal—nay, some of them much superior—to the general run of metropolitan performers.

“But the chief attraction when I joined the corps, and that which nightly filled the great amphitheatre to overflowing, was a female equestrian, whose enactments were of a most original and interesting—nay, often startling excellence.

“She was a woman of striking beauty, which, though a little past its prime and beginning to fade, was, nevertheless, by a little art and trouble, capable of a perfect restoration to its original brilliancy. She was a universal favourite, and the applause she nightly drew down was most unanimous and decided, and she seemed fully alive to it—in fact, her features used to

exhibit a strange, glowing pleasure in the noise that thundered around from every quarter of the vast and sonorous edifice, of a nature which I have never seen depicted on the countenance of any other player. A kind of anomalous enthusiastic delight, it seemed of an altogether unexplainable expression.

“Her face was regular in its beauty, save that a few might have considered it somewhat too long, and was of a decidedly Jewish cast. Her eyes were large, black, and rolling, with a remarkably yellowish glow about them, something like that reflected from a mirror in a room where there is a fire, but no other light. Her hair was short, somewhat thin, but silky, and black as the very raven down of darkness itself.

“Her figure again was the perfection of symmetry, and the lightness and elegance—the easy, confident, swimming grace wherewith she went through her evolutions on horseback, accompanied by the sort of absent mystical smile of strange internal pleasure she constantly wore in such circumstances—rendered her an object which the eyes of the spectator felt pain in being removed from for one instant, from her first entrance till her final exit.

“But there was another without whom she hardly

ever appeared in the circle, and who perhaps constituted a principal part of the charm that hung around her—her daughter, a tiny child of about three years old, exceedingly small for its age, but of much intelligence and beauty. Its face seemed absolutely angelic, whilst its little frame rivalled its mother's in grace. It was a light-tinted, flaxen-haired girl, altogether unlike its parent in features, save that its eyes of laughing hazel might possibly have fragments from the dazzling dark orbs of the mother.

“Of this child she was immoderately, dotingly fond. She was continually caressing it and talking to it in some foreign language, and never for a moment allowed it away from her sight : her very heart seemed rapt in the infant.

“Daily in the public promenades she might be seen walking along, talking and smiling with an ineffable sweetness to her darling, and apparently careless, or rather scornful, of the numerous young men that watched her, crossing the street, and crossing again to get glimpses of her face, and see whether that beauty which had so fascinated them amid the glare of gas, the crash of music, and the flutter of drapery, would bear the test of sober day ; or others, who, by various

schemes and affectations, endeavoured to draw upon themselves one of those looks of love which she lavished in such profusion on her little companion.

“But if she bore toward her daughter such affection, the child seemed to return it with a devotion scarcely less ardent. It was never happy but when fondling and fondled by her, and was always pining and moping, ‘bad’ (to use a technical term) when her avocations led her from its society. On this account it never was that favourite among us which its beauty and intelligence might otherwise have rendered it.

“I may state that she was a woman of very low moral character—an abandoned and utterly profligate person, indeed—apparently without any one redeeming feature, save the engrossing attachment to her infant. I shall say no more on this point, but leave you, considering her station in life, to guess the rest.

“Her name was Clara Benattar, as was also that of her daughter. She was said to be an Italian Jewess, though we could only surmise her origin, as she never talked of any of the past events of her life. At all events she had played for a considerable time at Franconi’s, in Paris, where a son of Mr. Codoni’s engaged her.

“The child and she used constantly to perform together on horseback, or on the tight-rope or slack-wire, on all of which she displayed consummate proficiency and grace, but especially the first. They were wont thus to assume such characters as Venus and Cupid, Psyche and Cupid, Hebe and Ganymede, Aurora and Zephyr; and the confidence, the total absence of fear displayed by the little one, when apparently in the most dangerous positions—nay, its look of wild delight when in such circumstances—its shrill, joyous laughter and exclamations, and the clapping of its tiny hands, conspired to take away every feeling of anxiety from the minds of the spectators, and leave them lost in delight and wonder.

“The animal, too, that she chiefly used, as if to render the exhibition perfect, was one of exceeding spirit and beauty. It was a young blood mare, black as a coal, which, having been rendered unfit, by an easily concealed accident, for the turf or chase, was purchased by our manager, and trained for exhibition in the arena.

“Well, our season—a perfectly successful one, though prolonged to the utmost—at length was over, and the benefit-nights came on.

“It was Clara’s benefit, and she had advertised some of her most beautiful and attractive performances. The great building, as might be expected, was crowded to the utmost in every part, but especially the gallery, the low rate of admission to which caused it to be frequented chiefly by the inferior and more juvenile portion of the community.

“A gorgeous spectacle commenced the entertainments, and, when it was over, Madame Clara and her child were announced amid continued rounds of applause. The black mare was first introduced, and led round the ring by two of the servants of the establishment, who ran at its head, for as yet it had not become so habituated to its occupation as not to be startled by the glare of gas, the shouting of the audience, and the ear-piercing music of our band.

“Then Clara bounded lightly into the arena, attired in a drapery that set off her unrivalled symmetry of person to an admirable degree. It was intended to picture her as Ariadne ; and round her loose, short, black curls was bound a garland of roses, lilies, and vine-blossoms—all artificial, of course, but perhaps better calculated than real for a scenic display.

“When, with one of her strange, enchanting smiles

she had curtsied lowly to the house, in jumped her lovely child, attired in a close-fitting skin-coloured dress, with two tiny butterfly-wings like a little Cupid, bearing in one hand a thyrsus, or bunch of grapes, and in the other a small gilded chalice.

“In a twinkling this little Bacchus had sprung with a clear cry of joyous laughter into her arms, and, kissing the creature with an appearance of the utmost fondness on the lips and brow, she took a few quick steps, and with a bound seated herself on the unsaddled back of the black mare. Upon the instant the grooms let go its head, and away it darted, galloping furiously round the circle, while the band struck up a most fairy-like and beautiful strain, one of the dance airs in the opera ‘*La Favorite*,’ of Donizetti, and the two men retreated to the centre, alongside of the riding-master and myself.

“For a time nothing was to be heard save the muffled-sounding rapid tread of the horse’s feet among the sawdust, and the fitful rise and fall of the wild melody from the lighter instruments of the band, with perhaps now and then an insuppressible exclamation of delight from scattered members of the audience. With these exceptions, all was breathless silence and admiration,

as the fair equestrian and her child went on with their daring and graceful evolutions.

“Now she would recline at length on the bare back of the flying steed, with an appearance of the utmost ease and unconcern, whilst the tiny Bacchus nestled in her bosom. Anon she would gently rise, kneel upon one knee in an attitude classically graceful, and look round and upward to the little one that, perched on her shoulder and embracing her flower-girt brow, would seem to be laughingly pressing the juice from the grape-cluster into the chalice she held aloft in her hand.

“All this while, the smiling look of warm and passionate affection to the infant never left her lovely features, though it was occasionally mingled with the blushful glow of strange inward exultation, so characteristic of her, at the quick, short rattles of applause that seemed to burst at once from the whole enraptured audience.

“Then she rose gradually to her feet, every change of posture being marked by the most poetical elegance of motion, and, skipped lightly on the bare croup of the wildly-galloping mare, whirling the young Bacchus about her head the while, or rather seeming to make

the infant deity fly with its little fluttering wings, as she danced in swimming gyrations.

“The way this latter feat was managed was simple enough. A system of bands, of thin but strong leather, passed under the child’s dress round its waist, beneath it, and over its shoulders. These all met and were secured together at the bend of its back to a strong steel ring, which she wore round three fingers of her hand, with the fourth and thumb controlling by a wire the two little gauze wings at its shoulders, which were mounted on small spiral springs, so that she could make them quiver, or fold them to its back, as she pleased.

“Well, while she was thus flying round, and while the house was all eye for her, and all ear for the admirable musical accompaniment—whilst the horse was galloping at its most furious speed—at once, just as she was opposite to the pit, the winged Bacchus seemed to leave her shoulder, and fly towards the ground.

“As it fell, one of the wildly flung-up hind hoofs of the animal met it, and the next instant it was tossed lifeless and almost headless into the air, and its little body, with its painted wings and gaudy frippery, lay

dead and motionless, like a crushed butterfly, among the dust of the arena.

“There was a strange, sudden bustle among the spectators at first—they rose to their feet by masses; many screamed abruptly with dread, others gave hurried words of direction, and numbers jumped from the pit and lower boxes to render assistance. But the great majority were altogether unconscious, for the first moment or two, of the harrowing event—their eyes following the equally unconscious equestrian, as she was borne with lightning speed round the circle.

“The riding-master and myself, stunned with the sight for a second, as soon as we could command our limbs, sprang from the centre, where we stood, to raise the shattered body of the child; but ere we had time to touch it, the fiery gallop of the black mare had swept its rider round the ring, and she appeared on the same spot.

“As she came near she seemed paralysed with surprise and horror, standing in an attitude forcibly expressive of these emotions, on the back of the animal, (whereon, from mechanical habit merely, for it could not be from effort, she continued to maintain her balance,) and, with starting eyes, uplifted brows, parted

lips, and features the deadly pallor of which was fearfully evident beneath the warm, artificial complexion they bore, regarding the steel ring upon her hand, to which a fragment of leather was all that was now attached.

“But when she saw the mangled frame of her heart’s idol motionless among the dust, with the wild shriek of a mother’s despair she leaped from her place, and fell, frantically grovelling on the ground beside it. A strange, unnatural scream was that!—such as shall ring through my brain when age or disease may have made my ears impervious; and it rose in loud and louder waves of piercing sound, till it filled the four corners of the vast amphitheatre, and was sent back in echoes and reverberations to lacerate anew the hearing, quashing the tumult of the alarmed and excited audience, as the crash of thunder in a tempest drowns the turmoil of the waters.

“All was confusion and uproar, amazement and terror, among the people; women fainted, and children were crushed and trodden upon, and they struggled hither and thither apparently without any object—a strong panic seeming to have taken possession of them; while over the whole floated a deafening roar of mingled

noises, louder than the loudest applause that had ever sounded there.

“ Meanwhile the band went on with their music, blowing and stringing their utmost to be heard above the clamour in the arena ; for they were placed behind a screen in one of the entrance-passages, to allow the orchestra to be filled with spectators, and were not aware of what had happened.

“ The horse, moreover, riderless, and frantic with fear and excitement, flew round and round, tossing its head in the air, and flinging aloft the dust from its heels. Several of the company and servants, rushing in from without, made attempts to catch it, in which I also joined. But they were in vain ; for the affrighted creature, darting from its course, dashed across the circle, and, springing wildly over the barrier that enclosed it, was the next instant kicking and plunging, struggling and snorting, among the densely-crowded audience in the space called the gallery, who, mad with terror, and screaming to Heaven for aid, crushed backwards with fierce struggling from around it, as if a very demon in a palpable shape had come among them.

“ Oh, the terrors of that dreadful night—terrors to

which the dazzling glare of light, the gorgeously-decorated scene, and the thrilling music, lent a strange sublimity approaching to the supernatural !

“As I sprang after the animal with a coil of rope, which I had hastily seized somewhere about the place, and which I intended to throw over it, so as to obtain, by entangling its head or limbs, some purchase whereby to restrain its plunging and drag it back into the ring, I got caught in the working vortex of the terror-stricken crowd, and, after a few struggles, found myself crushed to the ground between the seats, and, the next moment, trampled over by a hundred feet. After some hard but useless attempts to rise, I became insensible, and what happened thereafter I only heard by report, many days afterwards.

“I recovered consciousness in the wards of the surgical hospital of the place, where I lay—my frame a mass of bruises. It was more than a month before I was dismissed cured ; and by that time the circus had been removed, no trace of it remaining, save the hollow space where the sawdust, mingled with the sand, indicated the site of the arena. It was shut up the day after the above events, and Mr. Codoni, with his troop, left the place and went to America. When

they had performed there for some time it was broken up and dispersed, the manager returning to Europe, and settling somewhere in his own country.

“Of course I found my occupation gone, and once more returned to the legitimate line of my profession.

“Clara, I learned, was a maniac—the inmate of a public asylum. Here she still remains; at least she did when I was last at the place; but she is now quite quiet, cheerful, and docile; indeed, so far recovered as to have a kind of authority entrusted to her over other female patients.

“Since then I have played in other concerns of the kind, but never in any one approaching in the remotest degree to the splendour of Mr. Codoni's. For a couple of years I was part proprietor of one myself, which did very well till, in an unlucky hour, having introduced (my old passion) some regular dramatic pieces among our performances, the patentee of a royal theatre, on whose preserves it appears we had been poaching, instituted law proceedings against us, and ‘fixed’ us all in prison. After that, for some time, I could get nothing to do; and what it is to be an actor, without an engagement, and with no other means of earning his bread, thank Heaven! you can never know.

“I am now on my way to Soandso, where, among the exhibitions at this, the market-time, I hope to obtain employment as actor, Mr. Merryman, tumbler, spotted Indian, or I don’t care what.”

When he had thus completed his discourse, for which we thanked him sincerely, we rose, mounted the leafy bank, and moved along the lane towards the highway. Upon reaching it, this, our companion of an hour, shook our hands warmly, and, having been presented with a few of our cheroots, went on his way, and neither of us ever saw his face again.

We spoke not a word for some time after we had parted with him. At length, said Bob, drawing a deep breath,—

“What a strange tale is that he has told us, and how strangely has he told it! If that young fellow had a good education and a smattering of genius, and, possessed of both, knew himself, it strikes me he would make a tolerable romancer, as literature goes nowadays.”

“Nay, it appears to me that his tale is too strange, too highly wrought, too unnatural.”

“Pardon me,” cried my friend; “too *natural* is what you mean; for with such vividness did he bring

his picture before my mind's eye, that I fancied I really saw the whole scene, with every incident, pass before me, and was affected in my feelings as if it had positively done so. Now this I consider the triumph of a romancer, when he can produce, by his description or narration, the precise emotions that would be excited by a personal view of, or participation in, the events he supposes, if actually occurring. In order to do this, the grand requisite is in all things to copy nature to the utmost. Now, were I possessed of a talent for writing, such is the course I would embrace. In beauty and deformity, in good and evil, in charity and in crime, I would copy nature as exactly as I could. I would not depict her as innocent and virtuous, nor in her holiday dress; nor, although, taking her all in all, she is most lovely, would I disguise one spot upon her face, or call one wrinkle by the name of dimple. The very sores upon her limbs (for we know she is subject to such things), from them would I make no scruple to snatch away the bandages. The most violent and debasing passions (for we know they often affect her) I would bring to the metallic mirror wherein to fix their reflection. The most atrocious crimes (and we know she will commit them) would find no

softening or glossing over from me. Guarding always, that an idea should never escape me calculated in any the remotest degree to call the blush to the cheek of purity.

“What! must we give all our admiring attention to the Apollo and Venus, and turn from the Gladiator or Laöcoon as overstrained, and approaching the horrible? Must we be continually imagining milk-and-water scenes of beauty, virtue, and happiness, nor remind our dainty readers that there are such things in this woful world as crime, famine, misery, disease, danger—death?”

“Nay, but,” interrupted I, “you know that there has lately sprung up a school of authors, who, by picturing scenes of a fearful or horrible description, or actions of a deeply atrocious character, endeavour to terrify into the minds of their readers feelings of what they call intense interest.”

“Yes,” said my friend, “and there would be nothing wrong in this, if they did it naturally, modestly, and sparingly; but they do not: they paint the monster Crime in an attractive shape, and make their personages murder, rob, and seduce, as heroes. Now, one thought will convince you that this is quite against my

rule ; for, in the actual study of nature, we find that such a state of things never existed ; there never was in real life an heroic robber, or assassin, or forger, or any one wilfully guilty of crime who was not, in all respects, a most contemptible and execrable being. If then in fiction you describe one of the heinous deeds that fiction, to be a picture of real life, must exhibit, describe it as you see such occur in nature, with all the horror and repulsiveness that really does hang around such actions and the miserable actors in them ; but never allow yourself—as is done in a popular modern piece—to paint such a thing as a high-principled, well-educated gentleman, committing a dastardly murder on a wretched, low individual ; with what motive ?—money ; to what purpose ?—to increase his powers of obtaining knowledge !”

Just as Bob arrived at this point of his discourse, we discovered, all on a sudden, that we had lost our way.

We had for some time left the highway, and were now in search of the path over the moors that saved some three or four miles distance in our journey ; but, having got entangled in a maze of little cross lanes, and seeing nobody at hand, we felt rather at a loss

about our route, and for a few moments stood stock still, looking queerly into each other's faces.

But, as we were about to go off into a guffaw, our attention was caught by two figures apparently in the same predicament with ourselves, and the oddity of whose aspect and fit-out immediately fixed our admiration.

CHAPTER XI.



AN EXCURSION WITH BOB WHYTE, CONTINUED.

THE first was a long, lank, shaky, shirtless individual, with a scraggy bare neck, a stubbly beard, washy mouth, watery eyes, and a big reddish-blue nose, with a nasty whitish scarry streak across its ridge. He appeared to walk within and beneath a slight framework of wood and calico, which, though rather puzzling at a distance, on a nearer view appeared plainly to be one of those portable opera-houses, wherein Punch, that incomparable artist, electrifies the public by his brilliant and highly-appreciated *execution*.

Behind this interesting specimen stumped along a short, squab, but heavy and muscular fellow—an ugly customer in every sense of the term—somewhat less dirty, however, in aspect, than his comrade. This

second exquisite carried a box, not unlike our own, on the top of which was fixed a short, coarse drum, daubed with red and yellow paint, with a couple of drumsticks sticking through the cords. From the bosom of his waistcoat projected a soiled red cloth apparatus for securing a set of pandean-pipes, which themselves showed their noses from a side-pocket.

They came up—the first, with a hasty, knock-kneed, shambling shuffle; the second, with a sturdy independent trudge; whilst a few paces behind them a little ancient-looking cur trotted along upon three legs, the off hind one being carried in the air like a lance in rest—not so much from any necessity apparently, as from some eccentric whim of the creature's own. It had a phisog. of no small sagacity, with an interesting expression of habitual pensiveness, and appeared to be scrutinizing our appearance with as much attention as its masters.

We accosted them by a question with regard to the whereabouts of Drittenbreeks. They inquired, in a strong southern accent, the way to Soandso. We informed them of the path we had come by—they us of their own wanderings.

It appeared they had just been told by a cow-boy that

they must go back to an open space marked by a couple of dwarf trees cut into the shape of a bottle and glass, where the way to Soandso branched off southwards, and that to our destination in a north-west direction. Now we also had passed this identical spot, so that we found we should have to retrograde in company with our new friends for several minutes' walk.

Without more ado, away we padded together. As we went,—

“Comrade,” said Bob, addressing the lanky fellow, “you, I presume, are the chap that works behind the screen, and originates the queer phenomena that excite so much of our admiration and delight (prithee, friend, let me walk to windward and have this bunch of meadow-green between you and me)—while our pleasant companion here with the pipes and drum, supplies the orchestral department.”

“Yes,” replied Lanky, “I comes the moves, and Bill there does 'tother things, as you says.”

“Well,” said Bob, “I have a mighty curiosity to know the theory of these same moves: I am an enthusiast in mechanical science, and have indulged in many speculations with regard to the machinery of Punch; and now that there's an opportunity of practically in-

vestigating the facts, it would be unpardonable to let it slip: moreover, as I know from experience that knowledge is not to be had for nothing, I don't object to fork out a small sum for an insight into the working of this microcosm of yours."

"Why, then, as you looks to be gemmen, and not likely to be taking the scran out of a fellow's mouth in the way of hopposition, I don't care if I do put you up to the wires; and as our concern is slap up, with more than a dozen figures, I hope you won't scruple to come down with summat respectable—a bob, or at least a tizzy."

"Agreed. A tizzy I consider by no means an over-fee to such a distinguished professor, and for so much information; so pray halt your establishment at this green space—here you see are the trees the cowboy alluded to—and let me have an autopsy of the anatomy of Punch and Judy. Here's the sixpence for you."

The dirty-devil proprietor of Punch no sooner touched the coppers than he slipped them into a rent in his clothes, which likely led to a pocket, or some other receptacle; then, halting, he looked with a hesitating, significant glance to his comrade. The latter,

however, thundering an oath that made us stagger, and frightened a brace of sparrows out of the hedge like the report of a gun, shouted,—

“Come along! What the —— do you stand humbugging there for, with a pair of fools? When shall we be in to Soandso, think you?”

“You hear that ’ere, gents—I fear I can’t oblige you—Bill, you see, won’t allow it.”

“Oh, you can’t, can’t you? Perhaps, then, you can refund the blunt?”

“By no means wotsumever. No money returned is a standard theatrical rule.”

“Then, by the soul of Hengist, I’ll have it out of you!”

With this, flourishing his jacobin club about his head, he brought it down on the fragile theatre of Punch, and laid it a shattered wreck on the earth, with its luckless manager groaning beneath it. As the blow struck it, Punch himself was dashed from its recesses, and appeared to spring upon the grass.

When Bob saw this, he started back in alarm, remembering, with well-founded apprehension, the doughty blows he had seen dealt by that redoubted champion upon the sooty nob of even Old Nick himself.

But, alas! the irresistible hero was prevented, had he been ever so eager, from rushing to the rescue, for the dog Toby, that had erewhile been making ferocious demonstrations at Bob's shins, the moment he saw the puppet fly from the framework, caught it by the nose, and stood shaking it thereby with a face expressive of a conscientious discharge of duty.

Not so the stalwart and formidable Bill! Throwing his box, drum, and pandean pipes upon the ground, he came valorously up, calling upon my friend to stand out if he were a man, and he would speedily make him believe himself in paradise. To this beatific invitation Bob made response by hurriedly divesting himself of his encumbrances, and putting them, along with the club, under my charge, when, falling gracefully into warlike attitude, he stood on the defensive.

The showman, rushing on with bulldog fury, planted a blow for the stomach of his adversary, which would, no doubt, have *turned* that organ. But Bob was wide awake, and anticipated it by a fearful left-handed counterhit, sent with his whole strength from his shoulder, straight and swift as an arrow, into the mazzard of the other, extracting with the precision of dental surgery (in which he was a distinguished prac-

itioner) two of his front teeth, which, staggering back, the fellow forthwith spat into one of his palms to look at.

This reception sent him somewhat abroad. Undaunted, however, he returned to the engagement, and, dashing forward, made rattle upon the ribs of the student a couple of blows that palpably evinced his perfection at least in the drumming department of his profession. But the latter, stepping backward, and crying, "Here's a sight for a father!" jobbed him with his left, and finally, watching his opportunity as he came butting on, tipped him the "*upper cut*" with a force and dexterity that laid him nearly senseless on his back, alongside of his comrade, who was now sitting up among the ruins of his theatre, a semi-bewildered spectator of the combat.

He lay motionless for a while, till Bob, calling time and entreating him to come to the scratch, he got up, and, giving his dog a kick that sent it flying into the air as if a bull tossed it, walked to a little drain by the wayside, and, stooping, bathed his face, which now had, certainly, an altered look. As he did so, he addressed his companion with a voice of woful intonation:—

"Gather up, Joe, and let's be jogging; it an't no

use—give the gemman his tizzy—I've got a skinful, and no mistake. Devil a tooth have I in my mouth now more nor a suck—all along of you too—it's always the way!"

"Nay," cried Bob, "keep the tizzy, it may help to set your concern a-going again. Never mind me, I have had a full sixpennyworth of diversion. And now, Grim, after that, I think a pull at the Farintosh would not be repugnant to the feelings."

And he suited the action to the word; but, observing the overthrown manager eying wistfully his proceedings, his generous nature prevailed, and, looking with compassion on the fallen foe,—

"Alas! poor devil," said he; "would you like a drop of comfort, to set you on your legs once more?"

Slowly the fellow extricated himself from the ruins of his establishment, and, getting upon his feet, made a grab at the bottle.

"Hillo! my man, this will never do; you must get something to take the liquor in."

"Never mind that—my mouth just holds a glass."

"And do you think I would let your mouth touch my bottle?"

"Is not my mouth as good as yours?"

“There is more of it, at all events.”

Here the discomfited Bill interrupted him with—

“Hold your jaw, and let the gemman have his own way. If you have nothing else to hold the drink, take the crown of your castor.”

But the manager's tile was a ventilator—pervious to liquids as well as aëriform bodies; so, without more ado, he whipped off one of his shoes, and held out the heel of it. Into this original drinking-cup, Bob poured a modicum of the contents of the bottle.

Then, shouldering our burdens. and wishing them the top of the morning, we went on our way rejoicing, but, looking back as we went, we saw the two Punchites with their noses in the villanous receptacle, swilling away at the wondrous fluid.

Soon we emerged from the narrow wood upon the moorland—an hour's swift walk over which would bring us to our destination. It was high, open, breezy, and covered with grass, which the sun of summer had half converted into an odorous hay. The higher parts were stony and heath-covered, and ever and anon you would come to a deep chink in the rocky hillside, through which would be gushing a joyous rivulet, impregnated with iron or other ore—for it was a district abounding

in mineral riches. And then the cool wind came so caressingly about your face, while the deep blue sky, and scanty white cloudlets, and every object around us, betokened ardent heat. The march of four miles over the moor was surely one of the most exhilarating portions of that happy excursion !

There were cottages, too, in sheltered nooks, and here and there the mouths of mines, with their engine-houses turreted and ornamented like feudal towers of old, or haply with an object of, to my mind, even more picturesque effect—the atmospheric engine working in the open air, its heavy beams and angular rods bending and twisting in the sluggish, interrupted motion, peculiar to the machine.

As we walked on, many were the fragments of stone or of soil that Bob picked up, and, as he chipped them with his hammer, we discussed their nature, the order of formations to which they belonged, the metals whose ores they contained, or the chemical or other properties by which they were distinguished. Some of them he considered of such value as to merit a place in our box ; others, when he had done talking of them, he shied at crows or pee-weets as they winged their way over the moorland. Plants, too, and diminutive wild

flowers he was continually plucking, identifying them with the descriptions in the "Flora" we carried, and stowing away some of them in our book, for preservation.

There was not a butterfly, a moth, or a dragon-fly fluttered across our path, but we pursued it; and when, after a long and mirthful chase, we had run it down, with a needle dipped in nitric acid he would transfix the insect, at once destroying its life and preserving its painted splendour from decay.

At length we came upon a beaten track, then into a rough road, which led us to the little town of Dribbenbrook, with its stone cross, its broad main street, and pretty Gothic church. Through it we passed, and made our way along a narrow road, covered with trees, for nearly a mile, to the romantic glen of the little river Dribben.

This glen was an exceedingly deep and precipitous chasm, bearing a forcible resemblance to a cut made by a mighty hatchet in the abrupt wall-like ridge of hills, and allowing the water that fell upon them and the numerous mossy hollows behind them to find its way to the plain in front, where, winding away round the moor we had crossed, it wandered deviously till it

met the great river on which stands the town of So-andso, mingled with whose waters it was borne onwards to the sea.

Shortly before entering the dell, a compact little inn offered itself in our way, nicely whitewashed and very tidy—and well it might be, for the place by its beauty attracted visitors from all parts of the country, nay, even from other lands.

Here we rested, lunched, and replenished our bottle ; then emerging, we walked up the banks of the stream, through an avenue completely embowered with noble trees, whose green, cool, fragrant shade, combined with the joyous music of the gushing stream beside us, the thrilling notes of the birds among the foliage, and the plashing of a mill-wheel a little in advance, raised in our minds those feelings of delight which the enthusiast of nature alone knows in their intensity.

As we advanced, the mill appeared so exquisitely rural and picturesque, that we stayed a minute to sketch it. It was a little whitewashed bleaching house, of one story and fantastically shaped, a branch of an extensive factory down at the village, and had been built here to have the water in its most crystal purity, being used for the finest cambrics and light cotton

goods. Its machinery had a wet, humming, splashing sound, most musical and refreshing to the ear ; and about the door, and all over the open green field hard by, were a number of young girls, busy about their work, singing, talking, and laughing together. The reservoir of water, peopled by tiny fleets of snow-white ducks, added greatly to its beauty, while a thin wavery volume of blue smoke rose among the foliage above it from its slender chimney, itself to appearance scarcely more substantial.

Leaving this place after a mirthful interchange of greetings with the pretty operatives, we ascended the stream, and entered the dell.

As we did so, our ears were filled with the sound of numerous cascades, and looking before us we seemed to be entering a vast arch of rock and foliage, with snowy sheets of falling water visible here and there amid the leaves. The sides of the ravine (for it was not extensive enough to merit the name of glen) were very rugged, but nearly perpendicular. Yet so many were the chinks and crannies, the angles and platforms of rock, from which trees took root, that it seemed almost as if it had been filled up by bundles of branches thrown in from above. Natheless, frequent were the

pinnacles and precipices that stood up, gray in their craggy nakedness, although the great majority were covered with ivy, or mantled by overhanging screens of bramble or other creeping brushwood, while ever and anon a spruce fir, or other golden-leaved tree, or haply a scarlet mountain-ash (the dear rowan-tree of the north), would vary, by its richer tint, the every-shaded green.

The bottom of the ravine was a series of tiny cataracts, rolling down a kind of stair-like descent, formed by numerous huge masses of rock, tumbled confusedly together, and fixed in the most wild and grotesque positions.

One vast block there was that appeared almost to dangle by two corners across from precipice to precipice, while the water foamed and bubbled through beneath. Another stood up on one point, like a ponderous weight on the chin of an expert balancer; whilst another again had been arrested just on the brink of a lofty ledge, over which the stream made a frantic bound beside it, and looked as if the next heavy rain would hurl it and destruction together sheer down into the black pool many fathoms below.

And yet, amid all this ruggedness, vegetation was most luxuriant; there was not a little bank of sand brought down by the stream in winter that the summer sun had not changed into grass and flower-bearing soil—nay, from every hollow and crevice of these isolated masses of stone shot forth knots of grass, with intermingled wild flowers of white, yellow, or blue. Sometimes the ravine narrowed to a strait, through which the water had barely room to make a hurried gush; elsewhere it expanded into rounded cup-like hollows, down into which the sun shone most joyously, the bottom being occupied by a rock-encircled bank of grassy ground, or a deep pool, which on one side washed the base of a precipice, on the other shoaled away to a beach of white pebbly sand.

Nor less eminent in beauty and wildness of aspect were the waterfalls. Some of them were of a most striking and original description, if I may apply the latter term to a natural object. In one instance there was a round pit-like place, with inaccessible, yet completely leaf-concealed sides, and into this was pitched a branch of the stream, from a height so great that it was broken up by the air into myriads of drops, and fell a drizzling shower upon the large stones at the

bottom, rendering them continually dark, mossy, wet, and slippery to the tread. But at the point where the column of water fell asunder thus into rain, a most lovely Iris bent her many-tinted bow from tree to tree across the hollow.

At another place the whole body of the stream was projected from a high horizontal shelf of rock completely hollowed out beneath, and fell with a dead sound into the centre of a deep circular pool. You could walk quite round behind the falling water, and in the farther point of the rock-roofed recess a rude seat had been hewn in the soft stone. Here Bob Whyte and I sat down together, and enjoyed a cheroot and a discussion with regard to the geologic phenomena around us.

Up one side of this dell, and down the opposite, a rude footpath had been worn by the feet of pilgrims of the picturesque, which, however, to render it passable, required in many places the aid of ladders several fathoms in height. These, composed of stout beams of wood, wedged between rocks, were constructed by the villagers. The whole aspect of the place, in short, was less like what you would expect to meet with in nature than what you would look for in

the fantastic designs on a tea-tray, or the imaginative scenery of a romantic melodrama.

For hours we rambled over this ravine, climbing trees, chipping rocks, collecting insects and wild flowers, scrambling over precipices and into caves. Finally, emerging at the upper end of the chasm, we roved about upon the hillside till the sun had sunk low in the sky. Then, hurriedly descending, we again traversed it, till we came to a beautiful clear pool with a rounded grassy bank, from which an old tree stooped its branches till within a couple of feet of the water's surface. Its direction here was toward the west; and the brightness of the declining sun fell so richly upon the foliage and rock-encircled water, which looked so crystal and so cold, that with one consent we doffed our clothes and plunged into its bosom.

As soon as we had raised our heads above the surface, and while swimming about, exulting in the delicious refreshment of this bath after our travel, we observed an individual on the bank lay down a fishing-rod, and, with an inquiry as to the temperature of the water, plunge in along with us, and we soon all three were laughing, splashing, and diving about, springing from the branches of the overhanging tree into the

pool, and capering away in all directions. When we had our fill of this, we donned our "togger" again, and, shouldering our boxes of scientific specimens, whilst our new companion slung his well-filled basket across his haunch, away we started together down the ravine to the inn where we had bespoken dinner.

As we went, I took cognizance of the appearance and conversation of our companion. He was a slight, middle-aged looking man, with features well marked and decided, whose habitual expression appeared to be a smile of good humour dashed with a degree of condescension. He wore a sporting suit of a light cotton stuff that fitted admirably, everything about him was evidently clean and neat, and from his bosom to one pocket hung a slender and very graceful gold chain. He displayed, as he talked, a very correct taste, abundance of information on all subjects, and a firm though unassuming way of stating his opinion. From all these circumstances I concluded him to be one of that class of beings entitled to be called "gentlemen" by more than their own assumption of the name.

He had been enjoying a day's sport, he told us, in the upper portion of the stream, and his heavy basket bore witness to his success.

Twenty minutes after reaching our inn, a most respectable country dinner was set before us, during which the stranger and Bob kept up the spirit of the conversation. When we had concluded the repast, we drew the table to the open window, and sat down to a bottle of admirable sherry, which had been cooled in the stream at the foot of the inn garden.

The window looked to the west, and the view of a magnificent summer sunset, the feelings of rest after much fatigue, of a satisfied appetite, and of the delicious, warm calmness of the evening, combined with the rich flavour of the wine, and its exhilarating effect upon our spirits, rendered us as happy as it is possible for care-beset mortals to be.

Our discourse was of lighter scientific subjects—late discoveries—recent works—their authors—phrenology—mesmerism—supernaturalism. Illustrative of the last topic, the stranger related an anecdote, which certainly was a curious one, and shall, in all probability, make its appearance in these reminiscences some day or other.

There was a pause thereupon, and, he having requested my friend to relate any instance of a similar kind that had come under his knowledge, Bob Whyte,

while the pensive languor of the ebbing and dewy twilight was falling upon us, filled his glass, and, slightly sipping as he went on, narrated Episode No. II., in the shape of

THE FOOTSTEP.

I THINK there is one particular period in the life of every man to which he can look back as the most miserable he has ever seen, a point to which there was in his affairs a regular descent, and which passed, there has been again a progressive ascent—the ebb as it were in the tide of his fortunes. This crisis was very marked in my case, and I rejoice to think that it happened in my youth, for I have seen it occur in old age. Misfortunes of every kind were heaped upon me—sudden poverty struck me—and my aged and only parent and I, saw no prospect but wretchedness.

“Now then,” thought I, “all my dreams of honourable independence, nay, of scientific distinction in the world, are dashed to the ground, and I must forego those darling studies and pursuits in which my hopes were bound up, to go out and earn, with toil of body and heaviness of spirit, the bread of sorrow for myself and the one who has none but Heaven and me to

depend on. Or must I leave this dear land, of which my very heart seems part and parcel, and go to scrape gold from among the sun-scorched sands of fever-guarded climes?"

The friends of prosperity forsook me, and I skulked on the shady side of the street, whilst they strutted in the sun and contemptuously looked the other way. Nay, my own relations no longer received me with common kindness; the very bread I ate, which came from them, was given with a grudge, felt and shown if not expressed, and many a taunt was flung at the fool that had aimed at a rank for which by nature and fortune he was totally unfit, and had miserably failed—of course.

All this was bitter—bitter! I felt it cut into my very soul: moreover, I was smitten with a severe and prostrating illness, from a wound received in dissection, and was now but slowly recovering comparative health.

A friend I had too—ours was a schoolboy friendship—he was my most intimate companion—my more than brother—with whom I had lodged, studied, and grown up to manhood—in whom I had placed more confidence than in any other being—from whom I had no hope or purpose concealed: bright prospects were opening

before him, and in my distress (alas! for love without his wings!) this friend forsook me, and laughed and gloried in the act—he called it “cutting the connexion.”

But all this I thought I could bear up against, and I did so, hoping with patience and self-denial to surmount my difficulties—at least to fall before them disputing every inch of ground, and returning to all, scorn for scorn. But the hand of fate was heavy on me. Another visitation came and crushed my spirit utterly. I bowed to the dust before it, and became as those who have no hope.

There was one I loved, and she was fair—oh, how very fair! Do not doubt this from the fact that she doted on a being so uncouth as I am. She was the centre to which all my thoughts did gravitate—the golden evening to the morrow of my hopes.

I never loved another; and when love arises in a mind like mine, it is more than a sentiment or a passion—it is a something else, which mental philosophers have not classified or found a name for, never having experienced it, and of course ignorant of its existence.

We had known each other long, our ages differed but in a few months, and our dispositions harmonised

most closely. It is not to be believed, I know, but it is true, that never in our long intimacy did one word of ill humour pass between us ; for she was one whom no one could find it in his heart to vex—a soft, mild creature, gentle as the lapse of streams, and while her mind was of strength to appreciate the nature and value of my studies, and the zeal with which I pursued them, yet with all the diffidence and all the amiability of her sex she was eminently adorned,—kindness and pity hung around her in a palpable grace, and her sweet quiet laugh made the hearer's heart dance in his bosom.

Ours was not that passion which leads to evil. It seemed to consist of a soul-engrossing desire for each other's good, and a feeling of unspeakable rapture in each other's society. In me it acted as a kind of conscience, for no bad thought, no malice, envy, or hatred, durst arise in my heart while it was there, and it was there always. To it I am convinced I owe those habits of studiousness from which I now feel it painful to deviate, for all that time my thoughts but moved from the subject of my reading to the object of my love, and back again by a dear reaction. Often, long after midnight, when my lamp burned low, and the extinguished

embers rattled coldly in my grate, has my mind been quickened to renewed activity as the thought of her last fond smile arose before its vision.

She had a fortune, small comparatively, but still placing her far above my rank in life. Yet her friends were not averse to our union, for they saw that in spirit we were already one. It had been agreed upon between ourselves, and many fond day-dreams did we indulge in, how, when I had obtained my diploma, we should have a year's roving together on the continent, and then return again, when I should wait, with but her and my books for my companions, till a practice should spring up around me.

About two months before the time I particularly allude to, she had gone with her mother to reside temporarily at a country place in the south of England. From time to time I had letters from her. Heaven knows they were my only comforts in my daily increasing distress. At length one came telling me that she had been for some time ill—that she had not hitherto liked to mention it, but now that she was confined to her room she thought it as well to write to me. The next was short, and apparently written under excitement. It stated that the complaint was styled

aneurism, and that all she could learn with regard to it was, that it was a mysterious and fatal disorder. In a week I had another, long, and full of passionate tenderness. There was an expression in it, "if anything should happen to me," that struck coldness to my very heart. The next was from her mother—my angel was removed.

This was the consummation. The weight was now indeed more than my strength could bear, and, shutting myself up for several days, I resigned myself to the flood of my misery. In my adversity I had often before experienced great relief in mind from wandering out at nights and walking alone about the country for several miles round the city. On the third night after receipt of this information, when my anguish was at its height, I resolved to try for similar relief—at all events a change of place.

Though the streets must have been very considerably peopled, for it was little past ten at night, I have no recollection of seeing any one, nor of the course I pursued, till I found myself in a lonely street on the south side of the river, just opening on the country, and inhabited by persons of a superior station in the world.

It was very lonely, with tall, dark houses on one

side, and an open park on the other, and not a being did I see—not a watchman nor any moving thing along the extended way, while the few and unfrequent gas-lamps twinkled feebly amid the darkness.

As I walked slowly up the pavement, strange and incoherent ideas filled my brain. Despair, like a black and heavy curtain, seemed to encompass me, till its voluminous folds were all but palpable to my senses. There was a lifting in my mind as if some mighty force from beneath were about to upheave the foundations of my reason and lay the temple, a broken ruin, in the dust.

Presently, as I moved, my ears were filled by a sweet strain of music. It was some time before it found its way from the ear to the mind, in such a tumult of excitement was the latter, and then it was some time before I could satisfy myself it was not a delusion. At length my notice was attracted, and I stood still. The sound came from a house in front of which I was. I listened attentively—it was that beautiful hymn called “Rousseau’s Dream,” and was sung with a piano and horn accompaniment.

The performance was very good, and the rich harmony descended like a medicated balm upon my

bruised and weltering spirit. I had a strange feeling as if something within me was about to give way. I grew faint, and sat down upon the stone steps of the house-door. Presently the music ceased, and I could hear clear, cheerful voices talking and laughing, and apparently complimenting the performers. From this, as from the light shining through the crevices of the door and windows, I concluded there was an evening party of some sort assembled.

In a minute, another, a very beautiful voice, began to sing, accompanied by the horn only. The song proved to be "Kathleen O'More," and it was sung with much feeling. I could hear each syllable of the words and every note of the music. The same train of thoughts continued in my mind, and, as the strain went on, every other emotion faded, and gave place to overwhelming sorrow, till at the words—

The bird of all birds that I love the best
Is the robin that in the churchyard builds its nest,
For it seems to watch Kathleen—hops lightly o'er Kathleen,
My Kathleen O'More !—

at these words, and the heart-touching pathos of the music, the chord within me gave way, a flood of tears gushed to my eyes, and I fell forward with my

face upon my knees as I sat, and wept and sobbed most bitterly and loudly.

This must have continued for some time—how long I do not know. I was aroused by hearing voices round me, and, looking up, perceived the door open, and three or four well-dressed persons, with lights in their hands, regarding me with surprise, wondering probably to see a muscular and not very refined-looking young man display so much emotion.

I got up, moved away, and shortly heard the shutting of the house-door ring through the solitude of the street; and once more sorrow and I were left alone together.

Slowly moving along, I emerged from the end of the street into a lonely road. It was one that had been made to shorten the way to a small country town, the old road to which came from a remote corner of the city, and, after crossing the river by an ancient bridge of its own some two miles off, joined this at a point above double that distance away. By the old way I might return, thus fetching a circuit.

The road I travelled was nearly straight. A high stone wall fenced each side, over which the trees behind sent their sombre branches, nearly meeting in the

midst, so that its melancholy character accorded well with the mood I was in. There were not visible either moon or stars, yet a kind of vague, impalpable luminousness was shed through the clouds, by which I could just indistinctly make out my way. Not one living thing did I see or hear from the time that house-door was closed. I was in perfect solitude, silence, and darkness, and frequently as I moved I stopped, and, leaning against the wall, gave scope to my gloomy emotions.

At length I came to the point where the roads joined, and, turning into the other one, went slowly back toward the city. It must now have been some time after midnight; the same darkness visible continued, but from the trees being less frequent I could see about me much more clearly. But that was of little consequence, for I knew every step of the way and could have walked it blindfold, for this had been the route of many a joyous ramble in the days of my boyhood, and since.

Presently I reached the bridge. It was very narrow and lofty, with arches of great height and span, for the river was liable at certain periods to floods which would have carried away any less elevated structure. Walking along, I paused at the highest point, over the

key-stone of the central arch, and, leaning over the parapet, looked down upon the black waters gliding sullenly along in depth and darkness many a fathom beneath me. I could dimly distinguish their flow, with an indistinct sparkle in the gloom now and then, while an indefinite increase of shadow, far away to either side, denoted the banks. I heard, too, the ripple of the current round the massive piers, with its echo up the hollow arch, so stillly was the windless night.

As I continued thus motionless craning over the ledge, at once the idea SUICIDE sprang living up before my mind, divested of its terrors, and wearing rather an inviting aspect.

There was a refuge and relief from all my torture, flowing far below, ready to receive me into its bosom. I began deliberately and philosophically to consider the arguments for and against self-murder, especially those I could bring to bear upon my own case. They were numerous and conflicting. You will find them in Hamlet's soliloquy. But there was one which is not there—"Might not this act be the portal through which to find my way to *her* once more?"

This ended the debate: I was resolved; and, summoning all my fortitude, and murmuring a hurried

prayer to Him to be with me in mercy, I raised my knee upon the parapet. My prayer was answered. Upon the instant I heard a step approaching, and this arrested me.

“I shall wait,” thought I, “till he passes, and then—”

The step appeared to be upon the road, about fifty yards from the end of the bridge by which I had approached. It was a distinct, firm, steady tread, as of a heavy muscular man, coming up at an ordinary pace. With the exception of the rippling water underneath there was no other sound, and I could hear plainly and count every pace. Nearer and nearer it came; presently it advanced upon the bridge. I declare to you I marked clearly the difference of sound as it left the macadamized roadway and came upon the hard greenstone pavement.

It is some labourer, thought I, going to his happy home after his weary spell in the mine: and I fancied him for a moment with grimed face and clothes, and twinkling little lamp dangling in front of his cap, as I had often seen them.

But as the footstep came near there was a change in the time and weight of the tramp. The walker

seemed to have seen me, and to be regarding me with some interest and caution as he came on. I was still in the same position on the wall in which I had been arrested by the first sound. When it had approached to about a distance of twenty feet from me I thought I would turn round and greet the passenger as he went by, to divert his suspicion from my intentions ; but ere I had time to move a muscle, or even to will the action, the tread was suddenly and extremely increased in rapidity and weight, as if the being, whoever he was, had made a desperate rush up to my very side, to fling me headlong from the bridge.

I almost deemed I felt his touch upon my person, and on the moment sprang back into the middle of the roadway with a wild scream of frantic fear, and, while the cold sweat bathed my skin, and my body quivered with terror and amazement, raised my stick aloft to strike down in defence.

But there was *no one there*. No living thing was to be seen on either side along the bridge. There was light enough to see dimly but distinctly to each end, and I could mark every one of the stones raised to protect the parapet-walls from wheels.

I was in a panic of alarm and anxiety. I looked

around, into the air, over the walls, but I was perfectly alone.

“It must have been a delusion,” said I; “it was the wind.”

But there was no wind.

“It was the sound of the river.”

But all the while I had heard the tread and the ripple of the water quite separate, and well marked.

“It was the skirt of my pea-jacket flapping against the wall.”

But on trying to repeat it I could produce scarcely any sound at all, and that widely differing from the regular, decided tramp of the footstep.

Then I came with awe to the conclusion that in my extremity I had in very truth been visited by HIM WHO WALKS UNSEEN.

There was a more complete revulsion in my feelings—the instinct of self-preservation had been roused into powerful action, and, along with strong supernatural dread, had taken complete possession of my mind, to the quashing or extirpation of my former train of ideas. I had now no thought for my calamities, so great were my wonder, awe, and fear, and my gratitude that I had been so strangely preserved from mortal danger.

I felt that I had but a moment before been in the actual presence of some superior being, of whose nature, or sphere, or way of existence, my finite mind could form no conception, and was actuated by an urgent desire to flee to the city, and, by mingling among the abodes of men, rid my mind of the effect of these unnatural circumstances.

From the idea of self-destruction I now recoiled with horror, appalled and amazed that I could ever for a moment have entertained it, and in my own bosom fervently I implored from Heaven forgiveness for my meditated crime in contempt of Providence.

I hurried with my utmost speed along the road, and met no living creature till I entered the city.

A humbled and much-altered young man, I applied myself once more to my pursuits. Shortly my circumstances brightened, and in a few months I was better off, to use a common expression, than I had ever been before. New prospects dawned upon me, new friends I had, but never a new love. The memory of her loss never leaves me, but it is now divested of its acuteness, and has subsided into a sad yet pleasing feeling, which at times I would not be without.

The stranger, during this narrative, had been regarding my friend with an appearance of surprise and much interest. When it was concluded, after thanking him for the pleasure with which he had heard it, he began to offer some suggestions to account for the phenomenon from natural causes. Bob, like all others who imagine they have been distinguished by a supernatural visitation, refused to be convinced.

Since then, however, I may say he has stated to me his belief that the whole might have been the product of an over-excited imagination.

CHAPTER XII.



AN EXCURSION WITH BOB WHYTE—CONTINUED.

IT was now time for us to set out on our return to the city, and Bob, expressing a regret that the charm of the stranger's society should have led us to linger so long, proposed an immediate departure. The latter, looking at his watch, remarked with a smile that he had had no idea how rapidly the time was passing, and, starting up, we went out together, my chum taking the opportunity to give a sly pinch and a kind word to the pretty waitress as she received from him her own share of the reckoning. A gig was in waiting at the door, a servant in charge of which, touching his hat to our companion, addressed him by the title of "My Lord."

Bidding us farewell with an appearance of some

feeling, he drove off, and, staying till he was out of sight, we made inquiry about the inn as to who he was. We were told that he was some great parliament lord, but as to his particular title we could obtain no information.

“Well, at all events,” said Bob, “lord or no lord, he is a deuced clever man—one of *Nature’s nobility*, I’ll be bound.”

We now hurried along towards the little town, or rather village, talking little, and certainly feeling the weight, he of his box, and I of my tin case, both of which were charged with specimens of rock fossils and ores.

We had not gone far when a pedler, emerging from a cottage, joined us. He was an uncommonly shrewd, sagacious-looking individual, with a ludicrously hypocritical twitching about the corners of the eyes and mouth, and appeared the very fellow that could sell you a bargain in any sense of the term.

“Good evening, my old commercial traveller,” said Bob. “Warm weather, is n’t it?”

“Stormy, a wee,” quoth he, drily; and he eyed our burdens askance. “Y’are in the merchant line too,

are ye? Hech, that's a heavy pack ye carry! Ye'll hae hardware in that, haena ye?"

"Oh, deuced hard, I assure you, and the carrying it is the hardest of all."

"Ye'll hae jewellery too, nae dout?"

"Well, I should hope there are some precious stones in my box."

"And ye sell cheap, too, I wadna wunner?"

"Yes, but we lads of the pack, you know, are apt to spell our cheap with a 't.'"

"Guid forgive us," said the pedler, with a deep sigh, and an upturning of the whites of his eyes, indicative of a sanctified and deprecatory acquiescence. "Weel," he continued, "I've been aboon a dozen year on this beat mysel, and I cannot say I've seen either o' ye between the een afore."

"No, this is our first trip."

"And div ye like the beat?"

"Why, yes, we've been rather lucky I think."

"Picked up some tin?"

"Yes, and a little copper (pyrites)."

"Phew!"

Here the old chap began to whistle a tune. He had not piped many notes, however, before we got so

marvellously tickled at the whimsicality of the strain, that with one accord we commenced the accompaniment of a chaste and beautifully pitched “guffaw” for two voices. A most racy and original requiem it was upon the whole, appearing to consist of a strange and ingenious amalgamation of the more sublime passages of “Yankee Doodle,” “Jenny dang the Weaver,” and “Drops of Brandy,” all blended harmoniously into one rich and relishing ditty—a delicious sort of musical *tria juncta in uno*, of which pathos was certainly not the most prominent characteristic.

“Hillo !” cried Bob ; “where did you pick up that melody, may I ask ? Just whistle it over again—I’d give anything to learn it ?”

The pedler repeated the air till he could whistle it with considerable accuracy.

“Weel,” quoth the latter, “that’s gay an’ gude, but I’se be bail ye’ll forget it again before you come to the cross o’ Drittenbrook.”

“I’ll bet you a bottle of ale I don’t.”

“I’ll bet you a bottle of the very best Edinburgh ale, that ye’ll no stan’ at the cross and whistle the same tune.”

“Done !” cried Bob.

“ I agree wi’ you there ; ye ’re *done* if ye do.”

This was spoken *aside* by the vagabond, not so much so, however, but that I heard him, and doubted much and feared, as I heard.

And now we were marching into the town, and, as there is a fearful catastrophe coming, the which I am anxious to protract as much as possible, I will, with your permission, picture a Scotch village scene shortly after sunset.

We had passed frequent groups of children playing about the wayside, with generally a flower-dressed infant in the midst. Once or twice, too, we met a tall, stalwart young man idling along by the side of a slim, sly girl, who, as we passed, persevered in looking over the hedge—he chewing a twig, and she affecting to be knitting a stocking—or haply, if in a more lonely place, she looking blushful to the ground, and he, with his hand upon her shoulder, and his eye gleaming upon hers like the sun’s reflection from a piece of glass, pouring into her ear hurried and half-whispered sentences, whilst the massive head of the fellow, and his harsh but most intellectual features, told it was from such a peasantry that Burns, and Watt, and Telford sprang.

Approaching nearer, we overtook a family of beggars, lounging back to their quarters at the village from their day's excursion among the farm-houses, laden with "scran-bags," and seeming not to be unhappy in their degradation. The cottager's cow, too, we noticed quietly cropping the tufts of grass by the wayside, while the herds of the more wealthy denizens moved lowing homewards from the fields with milk-distended udders. Of labourers returning from work we passed several, as also the wives of the younger going out to meet them.

Then the one long wide street of the village opened upon us, with its small, thatched, white houses, the owners sitting on stone seats outside the doors, enjoying the balmy evening, smoking and chatting together, and playing with their children. In one part were collected a group of boys at some noisy sport, in another a party of young girls danced merrily round and round, singing and chanting at that curious dramatic game—that acted courtship—which is peculiar to them, while a knot of half-boys half-youths, watched their graceful and most coquettish amusement from a corner.

Oh, well do I remember the times of summer even-

ing, but of life's joyous morning, when I have sat on the grass, the centre of a cheerful circle, whilst those mad girls danced and sang in rings around me, and my boy companions stood by laughing, and pointing at me, and calling me "lassie!"

But what recked I of their mirth or their taunts when I looked, little yellow-frock, at thy yellower curls, as thou sattest, finger in mouth, beside me, and I stole often a bashful peep into thy dear blue eyes, turned askance to me in childish affection? Reader, bear with my silliness—these scenes are now, in very truth, far distant. Many a year of time, and many a league of ocean, divide them from me; and if in fancy I can wing my way back over the storms of either, grudge me not, I pray you, the single sentence in which I snatch the transient pleasure.

But the prime assemblage was at the stone cross. Here the young men were met to put the stone, pitch the bar, sling the hammer, and perform other rustic feats, whilst the big-wigs of the place stood by spectators, arguing now on points of the game, and now on points of politics as intricate and important, a thin, wavery vapour of tobacco-smoke hovering above the groups. The public-house too, was hard by, and

from the open windows of the tap-room leant, idly lounging and occasionally putting in a word or a joke from a distance, several sturdy tradesmen, taking their evening relaxation after their labours.

All the while we had been marching along, I had heard Bob whistling away at the marvellous aria, evidently anxious to prevent its escaping his memory, and to secure the pedler's bottle of ale, which, from the warm and dusty travelling, was become now rather a desirable object of speculation.

Hurriedly did he wend his way among the honest folks till he reached the stone cross, placing his back against which he began to pipe his whistle, loud, clear, and richly toned as throstle's melody, while the upper part of his visage, with his two funfraught eyes, beamed a smile of triumph and delight—to appearance taking no thought but of the pedler's discomfiture. But the latter had popped himself quietly into the public-house, and now from the open windows stood regarding his proceedings with a gloating grin of satisfaction that was anything but to be looked for on the face of a man who saw himself “let in” for a bottle of the best ale.

Right slapdash into the tune did Bob launch, enter-

ing with his whole heart into its spirit, nodding with his head to the time, and drumming with his cudgel upon the end of his box. The effect was instantaneous, and most miraculous. It acted like a talisman. The whole doings around came at once to a stop, and every eye was bent upon him with an expression of astonishment and indignation, while every ear was erected at his extraordinary warbling. For half a minute this lasted, and then the charm was broken. The Vulcan of the place, a fellow like a bronze colossus, had just been in the act of slinging his ponderous sledge-hammer, when the sound arrested him. He stood motionless like the rest at first, till satisfied he heard aright. Swinging the tremendous weapon thrice round his shoulder, he hurled it, with a horrible imprecation after it, by way of feather to guide its course, right at the audacious whistler's head.

The latter saw the fearful missile coming, and had but time to duck his crown when over him it flew, and, hurtling through the air, went crash like a thunderbolt through the roof of a neighbouring pigsty, the hideous screeching that immediately arose from the inmate of which told that, if Bob's timely stoop had saved his bacon, it was at the expense of other people's.

Thereupon arose from every lip loud cries of—

“Down with him!”

“Kill him!”

“Murder him!”

“Fell him!”

With oaths, curses, and denunciations of divers strength and quality, all mingled into one confused roar of a most valour-quelling description. Then I could see folks rushing from every door, eagerly inquiring the cause of the affray, and immediately swelling the hostile multitude that was advancing, a wrathful and most formidable phalanx, upon the daring but now devoted Bob.

For him,—when he saw this strange and most unaccountable effect of his music, his gleeful whistle sank, through a quaver of astonishment and apprehension, into a positive shake of consternation. Natheless, albeit well perceiving the desperate nature of his case, he nerved himself for the coming conflict, and seemed preparing to make a resolute running fight of it. But the butcher of the parish, a blood-thirsty blade, eager to have the first blow at the yet unbruised victim, rushed forward before the rest, with doubled fits aiming at the nose. Him he saluted with a tap on the scone from his Ja-

cobin club, whereupon procumbent in the road he bit the dust inglorious. But his dame, a ferocious termagant, seeing him thus evil treated, snatched in eager haste a bullock's heart, and with dire shriek discharged it at his vanquisher, but, her physical not being equally praiseworthy with her moral aim, the gory missile flew squash into the faces of the advancing crowd, giving Bob a moment's opportunity to make a forlorn manœuvre in his own favour. This he did by lending the exciseman (one of his most vigorous assailants) a left-handed compliment on the jaw that laid him on his face across the prostrate man of blood, and then kicking that part of his frame which thus, by the revolution of events, was fated to be uppermost for once. A burly grocer next, intent on earning high renown by tripping up his heels, received a remonstrative thwack across the stomach that bent him double, while from his grinning lips a howl flew up to heaven, at the sound of which the butcher's dog scampered away with his tail between his legs, and a cadger's donkey at the other end of the street brayed a responsive "hee-haw!"

But here, alas! the fortunes of the day were changed, for Victory, in the shape of a powerful sow (that appeared to have escaped maimed from the ruined sty,

and not to know whither to flee in the tumult), made directly between Bob's legs, and, whipping him neatly off his feet, capsized him in the road. As he fell, his box was dashed with him against the ground, and, what with the force of the blow and the weight of its contents, was shattered to fragments, and there rolled among the dust geological and mineralogical specimens the sight of which would have made the very bowels of Buckland yearn within him.

Alas, poor Bob! Would that I could draw a veil over the remaining events of that disastrous evening—that I could skip at once to thy rich revenge! But no; that candour, that regard to truth, which thou didst labour continually to instil into my youthful mind, compels me to detail with equal perspicuity thy defeat as thy many triumphs.

No sooner was the single-handed hero thus by unclean beast laid low, than the whole infuriated crew rushed at once upon him. One hobnailed giant hopped up and down his ribs, with limbs like paviors' rammers; the butcher recovered his legs but to kick the fallen enemy; whilst the grocer and gauger, as he strove to rise, pummelled him about the head with amazing pith and activity. But this was not all—

insult was heaped upon injury, and those geologic specimens which it had been his pride to collect, were used as rocks of offence against himself. Then did he first fully ascertain the nature of Gneiss-wack, whilst transition rocks made rapid transitions from the hands of his assailants to his own jaws, and his skull was battered by fragments that, from their effect upon his brains, deserved well their name, "conglomerate."

Oh! scientific reader, does it not touch you to the heart to think that a geologist, after a long day's search for a specimen of trap, should at last meet with such a one as this, and at the hands, too, of a rascally pedler?

But let it not be supposed that all this while I was only wasting my wind in unavailing apostrophes, such as the above. No; with all the enthusiasm of boyish friendship, and that for such a friend as he, I was straining every muscle to effect a feeble diversion in his favour. With the nicety of an experienced football-player I insinuated my feet among the ever-shifting ankles of his clumsy assailants, and not a few of them did I by this precipitate on their noses, though, I grieve to say, at the expense of a copious

largess of blows and kicks, garnished with maledictions, to myself.

But at length he recovered his feet, and, wresting the Jacobin from the hands of one who struggled to win it as a *spolium opimum*, made a sweeping blow at the shins of half-a-dozen of them—a proceeding which immediately opened a breach in the circle. Through this he sprang, and, grasping me by the collar to help me along, bounded away down the road, with the whole pack at our heels, shrieking, cursing, hurling stones and sticks, and sending after us entreaties more earnest than persuasive to come back and be murdered.

But they pursued in vain, for he was one of the fleetest runners that ever chased a football in the park of Soandso, and, although a little burdened with my unequal steps, yet soon made the fact manifest. As the last of them, however, a long-legged tailor, gave up the chase, he picked up a pebble from the road, and sent it after us by way of a tangible token of his regard. It struck me on the leg, rendering the limb useless to me for the time: I should have dropped to the ground but for the hold my friend maintained of my collar. When the latter was made aware of this,

with a hearty anathema at the donor of the favour (for which, fairest of all lady readers, I know you have already forgiven him), he swung me across his shoulders, and scampered along, with undiminished speed.

As soon as we were safe from all chance of pursuit, he set me down, and proceeded to examine the nature of my hurt with as much gentleness as if my very mother fondled me. It was not serious, but quite incapacitated me from walking, and gave an additional gloom to the long journey before us.

We were now upon the moor we had crossed so joyously in the morning, and, looking back, saw the little village sleeping below us in the soft gray twilight, that was now fast "gloaming" into night. Whereupon Bob, kneeling upon one knee, howled back his curse, like Mazeppa, upon the little town and its whole population, but chiefly on the heads of the blacksmith, butcher, grocer, tailor, and exciseman; vowing at the same time that, if his wits stood him in good stead, he would have revenge as consummate as it should be absurd. Then he insisted upon taking me up and carrying me along once more. It was in vain that I essayed to move unaided. My hurt was

now exceedingly painful, and I saw that I must either be carried or lie down for the night on the open moorland. I felt myself now a burden to my friend in every sense of the word, and could not help frequently expressing my concern at the circumstance. Nevertheless, onward the noble fellow trudged, assuring me he hardly felt my weight, and only hoped my pain was less.

Judge of the gratitude I felt when I reflected that he had already travelled that day many a mile—that he had fought two desperate fights, and once been thoroughly thrashed—that every bone in his body must be aching, and every muscle clogged in its action.

Our progress was slow, very slow indeed ; but the night was beautiful, and his exhaustless fancy continually kept alive my flagging spirits. In the course of this we speculated much upon the remarkable effect of his whistling, at which, even after all our misfortunes, we could not help laughing loudly and long. We came ultimately to a conclusion which, on after inquiry, we ascertained to be perfectly correct, viz. that this tune was the air of a song made long ago in ridicule of the Drittenbrookians by some wandering bard who had met with rough courtesy at their hands.

The richness of the music, as well as of the words to which it was wedded, made it a bitter bolus to its objects, and as much a favourite with the denizens of the neighbouring places; so that to whistle, play, or sing it in the hearing of one or more of the former became, among the latter, to be proverbially considered the height of daring. When we had convinced ourselves of this we began to see through the duplicity of the scheming packman, and to lament that we should have been, even with so much art, betrayed into such a piece of verdure (*i. e. greenness*).

It was past midnight before we reached the labyrinth of cross-roads where the footpath across the moor emerged into the highway; and, as my friend was excessively worn out with fatigue, I positively refused to go farther, and proposed that we should pass the night at a little roadside alehouse which we were now near.

Just as I made this suggestion a sound struck our ears, which, heard as we heard it at midnight on a lonely road, would be apt to raise a certain queerness of feeling in the minds of the most sceptical. It was a hollow, churchyard rumbling, accompanied by a trampling of horses, and presently the object causing

it broke into view in the shape of a huge hearse, with a grove of towering black plumes nodding and waving above it in the darkness of night. It was drawn by six horses, all housed to the heels in inky drapery, with lofty clusters of feathers of a similar complexion tossing on their heads.

As it came nearer, a noise of strange, unearthly talking and laughter seemed to play around it. My own hair now began to arch, and presently Bob's knees knocked together, and he dropped me from his shoulders. This phenomenon he afterwards accounted for on the plea of exhaustion.

But our terrors were changed to rejoicing when we saw the dread vehicle draw up abruptly at the ale-house-door, that stood open, and two postilions and a driver, every one of a more spectral exterior than his neighbour, jump from their seats and make a mirthful *entrée*, calling loudly for a pot of strong beer hot.

In we went, along with them, and presently we were all laughing, singing, and roystering together over a can of beautiful ale. Never did I see a jollier set of dogs than these same "ushers of the black road," as they called themselves; and the heartiness wherewith they acceded to our request for a ride to Soandso

in their sepulchral drag was as gratifying as it was timely.

They were returning, they told us, from having conveyed the body of a gentleman deceased, from the city to his family burying-place in the country.

As soon as we had snatched a hastily-prepared supper of eggs and bacon—

“Come now, comrades,” quoth the sombre charioteer; “don’t you think we had better proceed to *rehearsal*, as the players say?”

“Good again!” cried Bob; “just wait one moment till my friend and I light our cheroots, and then on to Soandso as fast as you like. The sooner this poor fellow gets home the better, so rattle along like winking. You have carried the dead long enough; there can be little harm in carrying the quick for once in your lives.”

Soon we had taken our seats within the gloomy conveyance, the two doors of which we kept open for air, and away we were whirled at a dashing pace, while the singing, roaring, and laughing were kept up at even a brisker rate than before; and we, between the puffs of smoke, joined chorus amain with all the strength of our lungs. A most startling apparition we must have

presented to the frequent nocturnal travellers we met or overtook as half an hour's hard galloping brought us into the immediate vicinity of the city, some of whom we saw dropping on their knees, others scampering across the fields, as we swept past in all our terrors of sight and sound—of which the red glowing sparks and the smoke of our cheroots, seen from behind, formed, perhaps, not the most insignificant portion.

But what was their fear to the consternation of my excellent landlady, as, awakened in the darkness of the night by the hideous rumble resounding through the quiet street, and the thundering at her door, the worthy woman flew to the window, and saw dimly, without her spectacles, the ghostly vehicle drawn up, and her favourite boy borne from its recesses?

In a paroxysm of horror she swooned away—nor was she recovered until, effecting an entrance by one of the windows, Bob Whyte restored her to consciousness by puffing tobacco-smoke into her nostrils, for want of hartshorn.

Some three or four days after this I found myself once more beside my friend in the apparatus-room of the Soandsonian University. I was now all right; nor did he give much token of what he had undergone,

beyond a big piece of plaster across his forehead, a beautiful areola of divers colours round his left eye, and a habit he appeared to have contracted of clapping his hand to his ribs suddenly whenever he happened to cough or breathe deeply.

We then concocted together a scheme, the working out of which forms the third part, or end, of this my epic reminiscence.

It had been the opinion of the wise and philanthropic founders of the Soandsonian University that knowledge should be afforded to all classes and ranks, and not only that they should have it if they liked, but that it should be offered—nay, pressed upon, their acceptance.

In consequence—besides numerous popular courses from which thousands drank the nectar of instruction—it was the custom of the professors to volunteer lectures, explaining, in a simple and untechnical form, different branches of science, in the churches of various parishes around the city. For this the people were always eminently grateful—a fact which they testified in various ways, equally satisfactory to the governing committee of the institution and the lecturers themselves.

Now, one Thursday—when, as usual on that day, a quorum of this committee were assembled in the library of the college, for the despatch of academical business—it was represented to them in proper form by Mr. Whyte that the parish of Drittenbrook had not up to that time been made the scene of any of those crusades against the Paynim ignorance. The scheme worked admirably. A note was immediately made of the fact. The clergyman of the parish was written to, and an anxious acquiescence was received by return of post.

It was next Sunday announced in the church, between services, that on the ensuing Saturday evening, a popular lecture, illustrated by interesting experiments, on the subjects of electricity, galvanism, and magnetism, would be delivered by Professor —, of the Soandsonian University, assisted by Mr. Robert Whyte, B.A. The minister, moreover, took occasion earnestly to recommend the attendance of the members of his flock, especially the more youthful, assuring them that he considered it not only folly but actual sin in any one to let pass unturned to account the smallest opportunity of adding to his knowledge.

On the important Saturday, big with the fate of Bob

Whyte and of Drittenbrook, behold us embarked in a capacious hackney-carriage—the Professor, his assistant, and myself. In the bottom of the vehicle, on its roof, and secured behind and before it, were numerous boxes containing the apparatus and materials where-with were to be effected the experiments that were to make science lovely in the eyes of the wondering natives, while the discourse that was to pour instruction over their minds slumbered in the old gentleman's coat-pocket.

Bob was now attired in a dress suited to a philosophic character; myself even sported a long-tailed garment of sacerdotal hue; my long locks too I had shorn, and he had shaved his whiskers, so that it would have been a wonder if in us the worthies had identified the forlorn victims they had so unmercifully served out.

An excellent dinner we found prepared for us at the parsonage, the clergyman presiding; and, to our infinite satisfaction, there we beheld the magnates of the village, viz. the blacksmith, butcher, grocer, and exciseman, each attired in a well-brushed black coat, and looking as sedate as became elders of the parish and chief citizens of Drittenbrook.

And here let me digress for one moment to inform

you, reader, who may have been born under a more southerly parallel, that every Scotchman has a *black coat*. This garment he and his good wife cherish with most parental assiduity, it being only used for the more solemn religious ceremonials and for funerals, on which occasions it is brought forth from its drawer, and, after undergoing a thorough process of rubbing down, is donned with a singular feeling of pride and independence. The possession of this important piece of raiment confers respectability, and no man is so degraded as the Caledonian who, however poor, is destitute of a decent black coat, wherein to follow his kinsman to the grave. But to nobody is it more absolutely a *sine quâ non* than to one holding the high ecclesiastical dignity of an elder in the church. Who could reverence an elder in a blue dress-coat, with Brummagem buttons?

Our worthy professor soon became quite at home with his companions, and with uncommon spirit discussed at once dinner, politics, the crops, trade, and questions of doctrinal dispute. As for his two followers, we made an early retreat, and proceeded to the church to put in order our machinery for the evening lecture.

A couple of large tables had been raised in front of the pulpit, on which we set in order an imposing array of electrical, voltaic, and magnetic apparatus, glittering in all its mystic splendour of crystal and brass. Around the front we suspended several striking diagrams gorgeous with cabalistic lines and figures of crimson, blue, and yellow, while we had in readiness a big bottle of sulphuric acid, wherewith to set in action our galvanic battery whenever it might be required.

Our preparations had hardly been completed when the audience began to assemble, and in another hour the church was crowded: a most motley assemblage it appeared certainly, but all very quiet and decorous.

Then the magnates, who had formed themselves into what they styled a committee, entered, and we rejoiced to see among them the whole of our assailants. These were accommodated with elevated seats around the tables, where they sat, looking as demure as any owls, the admiration of the good folks below seeming to be divided between them and the mysterious display on the tables.

At length the lecture began, and for a full hour and a half it lasted. The professor was in excellent

spirits, and harangued in beautiful style. We, again, were as alert as cats, and went through the experiments (the manual performance of which was our especial duty) with unexampled effect. The applause was unbounded, and our satisfaction proportionate. At length the speaker's wind and matter were both exhausted, and he brought his discourse to a conclusion.

The audience now began slowly to make their way to the doors, while our friends round the table, rising to their feet, began, with faces of the utmost sagacity, to handle, examine, and remark upon the various pieces of apparatus wherewith they had seen such astonishing feats performed.

My companion now was all activity and attention; from one to another he went, and explained with the utmost courtesy the uses and mode of action of the different implements, whilst they listened, quite charmed with his manner, and their interest intensely excited by the strange phenomena he was bringing before their minds.

A slight shock from the Leyden jar he first afforded them; from that he led their attention to the voltaic pile, putting to their tongues the wires from the two

poles, to let them experience the remarkable taste produced in the mouth by the passage of the fluid. Then he set before them the novel and striking electromagnetic machine, and at length prevailed upon them to submit to its influence.

Now, reader, who perhaps may not have minute and critical knowledge of the properties of this engine, let me inform you that the sensation produced by it is at first rather a pleasurable thrill in the arms of the person under its action. But an essential part of the affair, at least in the form we had it, is a small bit of crooked wire, like a staple, which, being inserted into two cups of mercury, by establishing a communication between them and producing a new channel for the mysterious fluid, instantly changes the above gentle thrill into an excruciating tugging and wrenching at the nerves, to which the most violent shock from a common nine-jar electric battery is little more than as a playful fillip from your lady's fan. In fact, it seems as if your arms were about to be torn from their sockets, and your backbone split into two.

And the best of the fun is that the luckless wight who is undergoing the agony cannot rid himself of its cause, but, in spite of himself, with frantic clutch

grasps convulsively the metallic cylinders through which the current passes into his hands, all that he has the power to do being to gasp out spasmodically, "Murder!"

I may state that the whole proceeding, if properly conducted, is quite harmless, the pain ceasing the moment the machine is stopped.

Mr. Whyte, therefore, when he had them all nicely arranged about the instrument, at the handle of which I was officiating, and when they had for some moments, with faces expressive of satisfaction, remarked upon the strange and peculiar sensation they were experiencing, on a sudden made with his off eyelid a signal which I was immediately on the alert to obey. At once I slipped the crooked wire into the two cups, and whirled the wheel with my whole strength and activity.

Thereupon, the unfortunate victims began to cut the most surprising and original capers, flinging their limbs out at an amazing rate, and twisting their frames about into all sorts of contortions. The group of Laocoon gives but a faint idea of their attitudes or their distress. They struggled and plunged about as if seven devils possessed them; threw out their arms

and legs; puffed and panted, and made convulsive attempts to cry out for help or mercy, which came to the ear only as inarticulate gasping roars. The water gushed into their starting eyes, the sweat poured over their faces, but, with an enduring remembrance of our own bruises, I turned the crank with only increased vigour and good will.

But all this time my companion was anything but idle. He got hold of a cloth, which he made dripping wet with the acid I have alluded to; then, going round behind them whilst they were unconscious of anything save the racking of their joints, thoroughly damped all their black coats with the colour-changing liquid. Then, flying to me with an appearance of the utmost anxiety and concern, he stopped my operations just as the burly grocer fainted away from exhaustion. He was profuse in his apologies for the untoward circumstance, laying the whole blame upon the little bit of wire, which he assured them had completely deranged the machine. He could not sufficiently express his regret at the accident, and severely chide me for my carelessness, while I stood by with aspect contrite, as became one corrected.

As for the poor creatures, they dropped into the

nearest seats, and began to wipe the perspiration from their faces and hands. But he, with most attentive politeness, immediately directed them to a basin hard by, which might be supplied from a jug beside it, containing a clear liquid, quite like water. This was a strong solution of nitrate of silver (the substance which constitutes marking-ink), and the result was, that four of them washed their faces, and all of them their hands, in the jet-producing compound.

As soon as they had recovered themselves from the stunning effects of their experiment, they got up, took their hats, and, wishing us a humble "Good night," went hastily away, with gait marvellously dejected, remarking that we and our machines (which might the devil confound) were anything but "canny" for honest folks to have to deal with, taking in with heedless ears our repeatedly urged apologies and expressions of regret.

No sooner were they out of the building than Bob and I, with wonderful despatch, began to pack away our apparatus in the readiest way we could; for the thoughts of the vengeful nature of the Drittenbrookians filled our minds, and sympathetic aches began to rise in the bones of our memory.

In a quarter of an hour they were all stowed away (with some damage certainly) and secured about the carriage which stood close by the gate. Into this vehicle he forthwith hurried the professor, who was solacing himself with a glass of wine with the parson in the vestry, and, himself mounting the box, took the reins, and urged the two hacks to their extremest speed, never relaxing the pace till we reached the roadside alehouse I have alluded to.

But the fun was not yet over.

On the following Monday we were again in the apparatus-room. The professor was with us, arranging some lenses for an optical instrument, part of which was likewise under the hands of my chum, whilst I stood by, in respectful silence looking on. On hearing a carriage draw up in front of the building, the professor, who was near a window, looked out, and suddenly started up, crying,—

“Red coats! Bless me, Mr. Whyte, I’m mistaken if this is not Colonel Queerfiz and his officers come to view the university! Run and receive them—show them to the museum first, while I snatch a moment to make myself decent. No! it can’t be; they have round hats: it must be sportsmen—foxhunters, I’ll be

bound, come to present us with some rare specimen in their peculiar line—an extraordinary fox, or a cub with a head in place of a tail—”

(“A *cubic* equation,” whispered Bob, attempting the pun mathematical.)

—“Or something of that sort—but it’s all the same : run out and show them this way.”

But he was anticipated, for presently, marshalled along the passages by the gatekeeper of the institution, they approached the room where we were, and, the door being opened, in they came.

And now a spectacle presented itself which set the old professor’s wits altogether abroad, utterly confounding his ideas for a space, during which he stood with his hands behind his back, gazing blankly at the strangers, with features expressive of amazement, strong curiosity, and complete “nonplussation”—(somebody coined this word, not I)—apparently unwitting what to say, or how to say it, to creatures of so remarkable an exterior.

Never in my life was I witness to a scene so absurd !

Six individuals stood before us, every one to appearance in greater mental tribulation than his neighbour, and all evidently as much at a loss how to begin the

palaver as the professor himself. Four of them had faces as black as the Prince of Pandemonium's waistcoat, and their red lips and white eyes appeared to grin a smile at their own ludicrous aspect, which, in spite of a misery their sable features also testified, they could not for their lives suppress. The other two had countenances of a piebald complexion, but were in all other respects in similar plight with their fellows.

Every one sported, beneath his diabolic physiognomy, a snowy-white neckcloth, and had the upper part of his frame enveloped in a roomy, broadskirted coat of the brightest crimson hue, the rest of the apparel consisting of various articles of more or less rustic description.

They stood sidling and shifting about, winking and whispering, and knocking each other's elbows, seemingly at a loss who should be spokesman—now forlornly grimacing, with a mixture of mirth and dismay, as they looked at each other, anon giving a hurried and horrified glance at what they could perceive of their own exteriors.

I could not believe my eyes at first, and acknowledge that for a moment I shared in the doubt and amazement of the professor—I could hardly conceive

that our scheme could have been carried to such ludicrous perfection ; but when I became cognizant of the full truth, I own that the perspiration came out on my brow, and I felt dizzy with attempts to keep down the shout of laughter that was springing to my mouth. But I had to give way, and out it came, to the scandalization of the professor's gravity, who joined with complete abandonment in the "guffaw," being seconded by Bob, and at length by the objects themselves, till the roof echoed again, and the glass apparatus everywhere about quivered and rang to burst after burst of rattling merriment.

The tears ran from our eyes, and, holding our sides, we fell against the walls and pillars of the room, till the worthy proff, after many attempts, succeeding in a frown, came out with—

"This is too absurd ! My good people, who are you—what are you—why do you come here—what do you want with me ?"

"Oh, sir !" cried one, now that the ice was broken, "it's the electricity—the shocks—ye ken, that hae done this to us. Isn't it a dreadfu' sight ? We're no the same men. Think on our wives—they're distracted ; our weans are terrified, and rin frae us to hide themselves ;

our neighbours are mad wi' daffin, and hae lost a' respec' for us. Look at this noo."

Here he glanced with piteous ogle over his shoulder, at the same time turning half-round to bring the gloomy red of his back full into the light, when the strong contrast it presented to his sooty physiognomy was richly perceptible.

"But who are you? that's what I want to know."

"We are the governors of the Drittenbrook Literary and Scientific Institute."

"Oh, the deuce you are! And what do you want coming here in this ridiculous masquerade?"

"We want you to change us again—to take your cantrip off us. We have been to the minister for a word o' prayer, but deil a bit the better are we. Oh, sir! for guid sake tak' your apparawtus and mak' us we were before."

"My good friends, I am altogether at a loss to understand what you would be at. Mr. Whyte, can you explain this strange phenomenon?"

Bob Whyte, thus called upon for an explanation, took his Jacobin club from a nail where it hung, and, catching up an old box from a corner, marched up to the metamorphosed heroes of Drittenbrook. Then

staring them full in the face, and drumming upon the bottom of the box, he commenced whistling, with ear-piercing loudness and amazing glee, the identical tune that had erewhile drawn down upon him their direct hostility, while the professor looked on in astonishment at this unaccountable prank of his assistant, which he was as much at a loss to understand as he had been to see through the other events of the day.

But their conduct was no less remarkable. They started—looked at one another—then at once the recollection and identification of my chum and myself seemed to come upon all their minds with a simultaneous stroke. The sound of his whistling entered like iron into their souls, and, as more loudly and more clearly still he poured the absurd melody upon their ears, they turned with crestfallen and humiliated demeanour, and, woefully sighing, marched in Indian file one after the other out of the room, unconsciously keeping time to the cadence. As they went along the passage, we sent after them a farewell peal of laughter that must have sounded in their ears like the hiss of old Drury in those of an author whose farce is damned.

Then running to the window, we saw them enter the old rickety post-waggon in which they had come, amid

the admiration and entertainment of a group of passers-by who halted around them, unable to make out for dear life who or what such strange-looking creatures could be.

“Mr. Whyte,” said the professor, turning to us with more anger than I ever else beheld upon his countenance, “I am afraid this is some practical joke of yours. You have been amusing yourself at the expense of these poor people. I trust that, the next thing of the kind you play off, you will have better taste than to involve in it *me* of all people in the world. As the thing is, if it come to the knowledge of the Committee of Managers, I would not guarantee your continuing to hold your situation in the university.”

But a few days after, when he came down quietly to the workshop to enjoy his pipe, Bob explained to him the whole circumstance, from beginning to end, when he laughed heartily, and averred that the only thing that excited his wonder was, how luck had seemed in everything so much to coincide with our wishes.

As for the sufferers, I never saw them again. I have been informed, however, that the citizens of

Drittenbrook since then have become remarkable for civility to strangers, and that the tune and song alluded to have ceased to possess the power of exciting their wrath, but rather seem to have acquired a tendency quite the contrary way.

Reader, forgive the digressive and unconnected nature of this paper. It is like the excursion, and describes a production of youth—vague, extravagant, without rule, and hardly with reason. Yet I cannot consider that, if chastened under a regular plan, it would have been equally pleasing to you in perusal—I know it would not have been to me in its composition. Its style is as our wanderings were—now wild in its fun, again melting in its sorrow, anon incredible in its absurdity—at one time erring from the straight path to sketch tree or tower, at another halting to list the tales of others, with which haply, itself has no connexion.

Does it not recall to your memory the adventures of your own early days? and is not the recollection sweet to your mind among the cares of mature life, as is the breath of a hay or clover field to one whirled along the

cuts and tunnels of a railway? If I can persuade myself it has this effect upon you, the delight it has afforded to me will be increased tenfold, albeit, whilst the polar star shines upon the scenery of which it is descriptive, the rays of the southern cross fall upon my paper as I write.

CHAPTER XIII.



LEAH MERIEL.

SOMETHING about half a century ago, the inhabitants of “the Thorn,” a village on the borders of Wales, remarked the appearance among them of a mendicant who had never before been observed to frequent that neighbourhood. She was a woman, and bore with her a child, whose extreme squalor and unhealthiness of aspect attracted compassion to mingle with the disgust excited by her own filthy and debauched character and appearance. She was tall, thin, and pale. Her clothes were tattered and dirty to an extreme degree, and she was continually in a state of semi-intoxication. Her language, too, and general deportment, were of a most abandoned description,—indeed, such as would have ensured her being stoned out of any orderly place, in-

stead of obtaining charity. But it was the child that was her bread-winner: the poor little thing was so tiny and delicate, so dirty, naked, and skinny, and appeared by its looks to feel so acutely the wretchedness of its case, that pieces of copper money were plentifully thrown to them as they sat by the hedge-side—for the road through the village was much used, the Thorn inn being the first stage from a pretty large country town.

The mother used to sit, mechanically repeating over, if she were sober enough, a whining petition for charity, while the little girl crouched to her side, and looked up in the faces of the passengers, her large gray eyes having such a pleading expression that words of pity were copiously bestowed upon her from those who could not afford more substantial indication of their benevolence. She was about four or five years old, and appeared so thin, debilitated, and continually shivering and shrinking, that one wondered how she could stand or walk. It was a most disagreeable sight to look at the sickly, fleshless child, dirty and cold, and the tall, slouching, and more filthy and disgusting parent, with her lacklustre, drunken eye, as they staggered along,—the latter frequently stopping to beat the poor unoffending

little thing, and she again, taking it all with an air of patient resignation, uttering no complaint, hardly even shedding a tear. In fact, the creature was so wasted, that one could scarcely guess where tears in her could have a source. I have said that coppers were liberally bestowed upon them;—all went for liquor, to satisfy the cravings of the mother; nor this alone—whatever she could lay her hands on, and exchange for money or drink, she recklessly appropriated, stealing utensils even from the outhouses where charitable people were prevailed upon to allow her shelter.

At that time public charity was hardly so strictly managed as now, and this woman was allowed to beg publicly, and even to take possession of two rooms of a dilapidated building about a quarter of a mile distant from the village. In a short time indolence and drunkenness confined her to this place, and her daughter was sent out daily, alone, to beg for their support. The disgust of the woman's presence being removed, people began to question the child. They found her remarkably intelligent and sagacious, and very grateful for such little kindnesses as housewives were disposed to grant her. Her name was Leah, she said, Leah Meriel; her father had been a soldier, but she

had no recollection, save of being carried about to beg.

This child displayed a singular desire for instruction, collecting together all sorts of ballads, printed notices, and such things, and being mightily pleased when any one would take the trouble to name to her the letters, and show her how to join them into words. The gift of an old book, torn and boardless, delighted her ; if it contained pictures, she was in ecstasies ; and things like these she hoarded up in a corner of the old building, where, when the weary travail of the day was over, and her brutal mother sunk in drunken senselessness, they served her for companions and playmates.

A year passed, and she became better known about the district. She was now more warmly clad, and a little taller, but still exceedingly thin, wan, and unhealthy, with a look of care on her sickly, childish features, most unnatural and unpleasant to see. She never affected the society of children of her own age, or mingled, or would have been allowed to mingle, in their play. They were her enemies ; by them the poor frail beggar-child was hunted and stoned. She more desired the company of grown-up women, and would hold lengthy and serious conversations with them

at times, not a little to their amusement. From such traits, as well as from her loathsome appearance, she began to be called, by most in thoughtlessness, but by some in earnest, a fairy changeling, and the name Fairy Leah attached itself to her thenceforward.

But there was one place to which, in her daily round of bitterness, she drew near with a feeling of something that surely was pleasure. It was a large house, inhabited by the proprietor of the paper-manufactory of Whitestream, from which most of the inhabitants of the Thorn derived their bread. Here she was always sure of a copper coin, haply some cast-off clothing, or cold dainties of the table; but the chief charm was, that the young master, a quiet, studious boy, would come to the drawing-room window, and amuse himself by holding long discussions with her. To him she was indebted for explanation of the mystery of old English and German letters, and for the first hint of writing, by the simple process of copying italic type. Odd volumes and pamphlets innumerable she owed to him; and frequently, as she was leaving, he would bid her go to the parterre and pull herself a flower, the prettiest she could find. Was not this a reason why the poor little ill-looking, despised, hopeless, and helpless

outcast should feel the load of her cares and sorrows sit lighter on her childish heart as she crept along the avenue of Whitestream Lodge?

A few years more and she obtained employment at the paper-factory, or mill, as it was called; the wages she earned weekly, and a larger allowance from the parish to the old woman, serving amply for their maintenance. She was now much taller, but still a perfect skeleton, and still she showed the same cowering, solitary disposition, the same eagerness to lay hands on old books and stray newspapers, but certainly much greater cleanliness and tidiness of person. Still was she insulted and neglected, or treated as an amusing inferior, by her fellow-workpeople. The latter, however, was a character she now appeared desirous to avoid, and daily might she be seen wending her companionless way between the paper-mill and the old dwelling where she had her abode.

The country around the Thorn presented the usual slight undulations, cultivated almost to a square foot, and dotted with frequent timber, which is everywhere characteristic of the garden of England. The first risings of the Welsh hills formed a barrier to the sight on one side, while in the opposite direction the

dimpled plain stretched away, itself becoming as a blue line in the far distance. About a quarter of a mile or more from the village, you observed what you would at first take to be a long, narrow wood, or plantation, dividing, perhaps, two estates. Haply, as you looked, a distant rushing sound would reach your ears, which might be the breeze among the foliage,—but it was the dash of water. What appeared a lengthened slip of copse was the hollow, dingy course of the Whitestream, which, descending here, found its way, by a scooped channel, to join one of the large rivers of that part of the country.

The sides of the little valley were rocky, if not precipitous, and covered with a plentiful clothing of dwarf oak, birch, and other trees, which, confused together to the distant eye, completely concealed the romantic hollow. On account of the crystal purity of the water, a quality which had obtained for it the name of Whitestream, this place had been long used as a site for the paper-manufactory before alluded to. The channel, after being close and narrow for a mile or two, suddenly enlarged into a little oval green dale, the stream winding round under the rocks to one side, embracing in the bend a rounded bank of rich

alluvial soil, covered with most vivid sward, whereon two horses, employed about the place, usually grazed. At the bottom of this meadow, which might have been a couple of gun-shots in length, stood an extensive collection of low buildings, partly of stone and partly of brick, the sound of machinery from which indicated the mill. At the upper end of it, again, was a broad deep dam, which supplied the factory below with power. Close to the edge of this stood a broken-down house, its roof partly fallen in, and the foundation of one corner washed completely bare by the water, a great rent indicating the insecurity of the whole fabric. In this place Leah's mother was permitted to reside, no other return being exacted from her than the custody of the heavy iron winches and other implements whereby the ponderous sluices were raised or lowered as the supply of water, or the demand for power, increased or diminished.

This building had formerly been the residence of the proprietors of the factory. Afterwards, on their leaving for Whitestream Lodge, it was occupied by the foreman and his family; but, from the increased respectability of this functionary as the works grew in extent and importance, as well as the loneliness and

manifest danger of its position, it became finally deserted, and the materials, not being worth expense of removal, were allowed to remain.

A little room, in its upper story, was chosen by Leah for her chamber, partly because over it the roof was rain-proof—partly because the steep and ruinous state of the stair prevented her mother from having access to it. And this separation was the cause of the improvement so visible, first in her dress, afterwards in her spirits, and finally in her person.

Here passed her girlhood. Fifteen years had she lived,—years of cold and hunger, sickness, sorrow, and scorn; but now this was over: her steadiness, attention, and neatness of hand, as well as her increased age, procured her advancement in the factory, with an enlargement of the poor pittance that rewarded her labour. Bodily strength, too, she began to gain wherewith to defend herself against her inhuman mother.

But at this age a change seemed to have come over her existence. Health appeared now to have visited her. She became erect, though lithe and slender as a reed. Her skin changed the pallid clammy hue for a clear lustrous white; and while her wrists and ankles

and small hands and feet remained the same, the rest of her limbs expanded, assuming a rounded fulness of shape, yet still light and airy to a degree. Her waist continued slight as ever, but her chest swelled, her shoulders became full and obtuse, her gentle bosom budded forth into early womanhood, and her sunken cheeks plumped out into a perfect oval. It was then discovered that her features were exactly regular. But when her lips, no longer colourless, pouted like a double cherry, and a glow settled on each cheek, at first flitting and changing, but at length fixed in sunny permanence—when her gray eyes sparkled with cheerfulness, beneath her high cold forehead, clouded by the simple braids of her flaxen hair—and when a small timid dimple ventured upon her little round chin, then it was she stood confessed the Beauty of the Mill, the Thorn, the parish, the district of country.

She was somewhat under the middle height of women, and possessed of a delicacy of feature, complexion, and shape, that excited in all wonder and admiration. She appeared so slender and fragile, yet still so symmetrical and so graceful in every motion, that the term “Fairy Leah,” which had been given her on account of her deformity, became now the soubri-

quet,—oh, how much more appropriate!—of her sudden loveliness.

And now you fancy I am about to treat you to the old story of gentle, or haply even noble blood, long crushed and concealed, but at length bursting into light, and rising to its own proper place, like water to its level. But Leah was, in very truth, the daughter of a beggar,—in metaphor, the child of care, disease, and toil.

How many that, erewhile, made the poor little mendicant a subject of injury or insult, now envied, hated, or madly loved her! Yes! many of those young men who had laughed a year or two before, as they stoned her from their fathers' doors, or sent their dogs barking and tearing after her, would now have been proud to do her the most menial service, to obtain one kind look, one gladdening smile. What errands they invented merely to have the rapture of speaking to her for a moment, even about ordinary matters, and hearing the sweet, low notes of her dulcet voice in reply! But, still timorous and bashful, Leah shunned all advances, avoided all companionship, even of her own sex, and might be seen tripping lightly away to the ruined building as soon as the

bell at the mill announced that work for the day was over.

Her labour was of a light description, and pretty well remunerated. It consisted in inspecting the finished writing-paper, and with an instrument of a peculiar shape scraping away any blemishes, specks for instance, which, floating about in the solution of size into which the sheets are dipped, in order to prevent the ink from spreading,—in fact, to convert them from blotting-paper,—might have adhered to them. This required great nicety of touch, and was a clean and rather superior department of the manufacture; consequently, both in dress and person, she required to be of a very different aspect from the girls who laboured in other parts of the work. The paper made at White-stream was of the finest quality, and for the London market; and certainly no hand, however highborn, that wrote upon it, could outvie in shape, hue, or delicacy, that gentle one, which, moving lightly, as over the keys of a musical instrument, put the finishing touch to its fabric.

About half a mile from the factory lay some fields which, forming the subject of litigation between two proprietors, were then, and continued to be for some

years longer, in grass. No road or lane lay in that quarter near enough to command a view of these ; on the other hand, the prospect from them was very extensive, varied, and beautiful. They ran along the southern skirts of the narrow wood that concealed the course of the Whitestream. On the balmy summer evenings Leah began now to be seen, by the few whom chance led in that direction, loitering about these fields in company with a young man in dark clothes, who wore his hat slouched far over his forehead. When looked at, it was remarked they used to retire among the trees and down into the dell ; desirous, apparently, not so much of eluding observation as of avoiding intrusion. Some, too, who had gone up the copsewood at night to snare the game that abounded there, or to set or lift fishing-lines in the stream, had seen two persons sitting together on the bank, beside a wild rosebush that grew hard by the old building, and by the summer moonlight were able to recognise Fairy Leah and her dusky, spectral lover.

Two years passed over, the while this strange dalliance lasted,—dalliance which was as Paradise to poor Leah Meriel, for a passion possessed her, fervent, single, and unchangeable ; a love the effect of youth,

solitude, and an ardent imagination. If ever there was perfect bliss enjoyed by creature of clay, it was by her in this hidden intercourse. All the thoughts and feelings that in ordinary people are divided among relations, friends, wealth, and every other object that excites emotion, were in her lovely bosom bent in one passion—upon one object, that returned it with an equal intensity. She had never known what it was to be loved, until by him. Kindness unalloyed with contempt she had received from no other—he and happiness to her were one idea. Bred in solitude, squalor, and affliction, she never could have imagined the existence of such a thing as *love*. She had seen the word in her books, it is true, but she passed it as she would have done any other syllable to which her simple mind could attach no idea: and now, to plunge at once into all the delirious joy of the novel and exquisite emotion! It was even as one who, born deaf, by aid of noble surgery has the sense of hearing awakened in him. With the same rapture wherewith such a person would first listen to a strain of distant music—with the same wild delight did she revel in the new-discovered feeling—the same! nay, greater, more potent, a thousand fold; for the first is a matter of sense, the

second, of soul ! It was in very sooth an intoxicating cup, but there was deep sin mingled in the draught, and bitter, bitter, proved to be the dregs.

But a new character here entered upon the scene,—George Basil, Esq., the proprietor of the Whitestream factory. This was a man of wealth, possessed of land to the amount of about a thousand pounds annually, and drawing many times that income from his business as a manufacturer. He was an aged libertine. If there be any circumstances in which vice may be looked upon with leniency, it is in youth, that season of burning thoughts and gushing pulses. But with what eyes can we contemplate a hoary sinner, who, after spending a life of wickedness, now, when his blood winds cold and sluggish through his veins, publicly and shamelessly employs the experience of age, and the temptations of hoarded wealth, for the accomplishment of evil? I may state that he had been the father of a family.

Observing Leah's extreme delicacy of form and face, he began towards her a course of offensive attention that ultimately drove her from the factory. She remained away, shut up in the old dilapidated building. Late one night, shortly after her leaving work, Basil found his way to this place.

Leah's mother sat alone in a low brick-paved apartment, that had formerly been the kitchen of the house. She was crouching, half naked and horribly filthy, in a corner of the great old chimney, over a fire of sticks, which her daughter had provided and kindled. Beside her lay a bottle, which had contained liquor, but it was now empty, as was a small tin pannikin she had used to drink from. She was smoking a short pipe, perfectly black from long use, and was in her usual state of dozing half-drunkenness.

He lifted the latch, and pushed open the door. Albeit used to scenes of the most revolting description, he was hardly prepared for such an incarnation of disgust as he now beheld. He hesitated, but at length entered, and addressed her.

Turning her head and looking up, she beheld a stout, large man, with his coat buttoned across his chest. He was gray-haired, with a bald crown. His features were heavy, and of a tallowy complexion. His lips, thick at the angles, bloodless in colour, and continually wet, along with his cold gray eye, leered a hideous, unnatural smile. They had known each other of old, and she recognised him immediately, surmising with accuracy the purpose of his visit.

She motioned him to a heavy stool, the only seat in the place, she herself sitting on a stone ; and a whispered conversation commenced between them, eked out by winks, nods, and significant grins. Can you imagine a mother making traffic of the virtue of her child—for a few coins, selling her daughter to sin and misery here, and, haply, endless ruin hereafter ?

“No !” you cry, “human nature can never be so depraved, so utterly dead to all, even animal feeling !”

Alas ! alas ! a medical man sees more of frail human nature in one year, than the professed student of mankind during a lifetime of travel ! What would you think of a mother selling her offspring for dissection ?

He put several pieces of gold into her hand. She took them, passed them between her finger and thumb, and slipped them into the bosom of her dress, while he looked on in silence. At that moment he thought he heard, in a distant quarter of the ruinous building, a foot moving upon a wooden floor.

“Surely,” thought he, “that cannot be her footstep, so heavy and decided ?”

Presently the sound as of voices speaking together,

and a quiet, happy laugh, reached his ear. He began to entertain doubts.

“ I say, Sarah,” he commenced, “ I hope it’s all right—eh?” and he added a series of signs to the speech.

“ Right! I should think so.”

“ Well, at least let me have a light; it’s the right-hand door, at the end of the passage, you say?”

“ Yes, mind; the right-hand door; if you take the left you will fall through the floor down into the cellar, which is full of water from the dam.”

“ That would be a consummation hardly to be wished, Sal, so just let me have a stick from your fire;” and he lighted a small bull’s-eye lantern. “ I find this sort of thing very useful, at times, of an evening.”

He went out: she crept to the door after him and listened.

She heard him scrambling up the ruinous staircase, then treading along the passage. Then a door opened, there was sound of rapid talking, loud screams from a female, then a sudden noise of struggling, and a hoarse and wild cry of “ Murder !”

“ By Heaven, that’s the master !” cried a voice beside her. It was that of Basil’s confidential servant, who had

been left at the mill with their horses, but, attracted by curiosity, had come to listen and watch. "Give me a light," he continued ; "there's the deuce to pay up there : " and, catching a flaming stick from the fire, he sprang up the stair. It was some time before he could find his way ; at length, seeing a light through the chinks of a door, he pushed it open and entered.

It was a small apartment, exceedingly clean and tidy : a cheerful little fire was burning right before him, and a table stood near it with candles, books, papers, and some sewing-work. On a small bed, in a corner, was laid back, insensible, the slight frame of Fairy Leah Meriel. Her dress was torn, her hair loose, and a look of wild terror was stamped upon her features. Her right hand grasped firmly a knife ; her left was clenched, but empty. On the floor, prone on his face, lay the master. He went forward to raise him, but, as he did so, found that his feet stuck to the boards. They were covered with blood. The poor fellow was horrified ; how much more when, raising the body, he perceived the features twitching with the faint spasms of departing life, while from a hideous gash in the forehead blood was welling like water. For a moment he was irresolute what to do, and the idea struck him

—might not he himself be implicated with the crime? Laying the body on the floor, he ran from the house down to the factory, where rousing the people who were living in various parts of it, he brought them in a crowd to behold the deed that had been done.

They gathered round the old ruinous house, ventured in, one by one. They were amazed, and knew not whom to accuse, what to do, or what to think. Some busied themselves in restoring to animation the senseless body of the girl, others in raising and examining that of the squire, as he was called. As soon as Leah recovered consciousness, she sat up on the bed, and looked around her at the wondering assemblage. Then she lifted the hand that still clutched the knife, looked at it, and laid it down on a shelf close by. Presently observing the body of Basil, she shuddered, and, turning away, fell down once more at length. They thought she had fainted again, but she was only overpowered by excess of thought.

One of them spoke to her.

“What is this you have done now, Leah?”

“I did not do it,” she replied, “God is my witness!”

“Who did it then?”

“ Oh, most dreadful !” she murmured, and was silent for a while ;—then “ Do with me what you please,” said she ; “ I will answer no more questions.”

They took her away to the Thorn inn, carrying with them the knife she had held in her hand ; but they remarked there was no spot upon it, it was perfectly bright, cold, and clear. Besides, it was plain to all that this weapon could never have inflicted the fearful wound upon Basil’s brow.

It was altogether a most mysterious affair. Many of the superstitions of Wales had found their way thus far into the low country, and strange things were whispered with regard to Fairy Leah and her shadowy lover. Old stories began to be told of a sombre spirit that had in times bygone haunted the dell ; and it was hinted that not for nothing had the old house been deserted, first by the Basils themselves, and then by the foreman of the mill. Leah’s startling change of aspect was itself palpable proof of some dark communion with superior powers. Nay, the very blow was not such as was e’er inflicted by hand of clay—the forehead seemed to be so completely *stove in*, to use the expression of the people.

But in the mean while a coroner’s inquest was held

on the body at the Thorn inn, and their verdict was "Conspiracy and murder against Sarah Meriel, Leah Meriel, and some other person or persons unknown." The evidence of Basil's servant was the chief in bringing about this conclusion.

Poor Fairy Leah!—her summer dream of delight proved to be brief as it was exquisite, and her season of sorrow once more set in with tenfold bitterness. She was committed to prison. Warrants were issued for the apprehension of her mother as a partner in the crime. They searched the ruined house, and all about the mill and the dell it stood in, but without success. At last she was found in an obscure part of the county-town, lying lifeless in a kennel, dead of drunkenness, wrapped in a rag; and, hid in the bosom of her dress were found nine guineas of ten she had received from Basil: with the tenth she had purchased her destruction.

In the mean time, Mr. Basil junior, who was at London, a law-student, arrived at the county-town; he did not come to the factory or to Whitestream Lodge, but sent for the manager to come to him. This person he admitted to a share in the concern, as acting partner, himself not having the intention of

interfering with the business. This completed, he left again for the metropolis.

But as for poor little Leah, it was several months till the assizes that were to decide her fate, and that time she had to languish in a gaol. But do not sink, gentle Leah: there is one who, albeit himself fearfully, namelessly criminal, knows your innocence, and will stir heaven and earth to make it avail you.

Does not the whistle of that wild Welsh air, coming nightly to your ear through the iron lattice that to you fetters the light of Heaven, breathe to your heart confidence and hope? They offer you pardon to be crown evidence! Alas! they do not know of the living bond by which you are bound for his security.

One evening, close before the day appointed for her trial, a gentleman sat in a lonely apartment in one of the sombre streets on the outskirts of the county-town already alluded to. He was alone, busy writing, and that with the air of one to whom composition is a matter not only of habitual occupation, but also of great pleasure. As it was very late, indeed within an hour of midnight, he had resigned himself completely to his intellectual labour. His neckerchief was removed; every button whose tightness could for a mo-

ment draw his attention was unloosed ; his slippered feet rested on a stool within the fender ; and a well-linked dressing-gown enveloped his figure. A lamp with a paper shade, perched on the top of a pile of books, lighted the table, leaving the further parts of the room in obscurity. He continued to ply his pen with careless rapidity, frequently pausing and raising his head, his eyes looking vacantly into the darkness around, anon bending him to his task, the scratching of the point over the paper, and the occasional sound of a cinder falling upon the hearth, being all that interrupted the stillness of the chamber.

So absorbed was he that he did not remark a knock at the house-door, the sound of its opening, or a quick step ascending the stairs and entering the room.

It was a tall, spare, dark-complexioned young man, with a strangely bright eye. He placed a broad-brimmed hat on the table, and, drawing off his black leather gloves, laid them across its lip. He then, leaning his hand beside it, continued to gaze at the busy penman, with a look in which a student of nature might detect and separate respect, envy, self-accusation, anxiety, and embarrassment. At length, as

the latter raised his eyes, they encountered those of the new comer.

He regarded him with a bewildered look.

“Well,” said the other, smiling, “surely you don’t take me for my own ghost. How are you? How progresses the *Independent*? Interest advancing in the country—eh?”

“What—well—really, my dear fellow, excuse me, I took it for some illusion. But where have you been all this while?—How have you been disposing of yourself?—Studying hard?—or—bless me! you have been ill, John—you are as thin as a lath! and, as I live, your hair is *turned grey*, or I have bedeviled my eyes somehow!”

“——What is this you are about?” said the other, as if to break the course of the conversation, and drive off, for a moment longer, some disagreeable subject: “a heavy-hitting leader for the old journal, eh?”

“Ay, you may say that; small help have we had from you lately. I had feared that crack article exhausted you.”

“What article?”

“The analysis, you recollect, of the character and policy of Mirabeau.”

“ Ah, yes ; that was the thing Sir Something Somebody pirated from in the House of Commons.”

“ Ay, I suppose, since you have been writing for the London periodicals, you have quite forgotten your connexion with an obscure country newspaper and its obscure editor.”

“ No, Will, believe me, I have not written a sentence since I wrote in this room. No ; I have got wrought up with a fearful piece of business—God help me !”

And he threw himself abruptly into a chair, a still blacker shade passing over his dark features, like a cloud-shadow over a nocturnal landscape ; while his eyes, which seemed usually possessed of almost an unnatural light, shot forth a glance, as if a flame had glared up suddenly, and sunk again within his head.

“ Put away your papers, Will, and attend to me ; I have something to tell you that will put politics out of your head for the night.”

“ What, a duel, eh ?”

“ Folly ! I am about to put the strength of our friendship to a severe test ; and, first, give me your word of honour that what passes between us shall never reach the ears of any other being.”

“Nay, I will make no rash promises, but you may rely on my friendship, John; I trust our intimacy has subsisted too long for you to feel any scruples about imparting a secret to me.”

“I will trust you—I can do no better; and now, William, I am laying my life into your hands. That girl, Meriel, that is to be tried on Monday—”

“Well!”

“—is altogether innocent of the crime imputed to her.”

“Then, I suppose, that will come out in the evidence.”

“Possibly not; that is the reason I have come here to-night. You must save her.”

“I!—how, pray?”

“You are foreman of the jury, and will have absolute influence over them. The people of the town have the utmost confidence in your judgment and your virtue—most justly, I allow. I am convinced that if any one, of what party soever, were asked who was the most talented man in the place, the answer would be, the editor of the *Independent*. In fact, they hold you little less than an inspired person. I do not say this in silly flattery, Will, but to show you how you are

to fulfil my request. I know that in that jury your opinion will lead every other, and, in fact, form the verdict. Now you are to know beforehand that the dear girl is as guiltless of the crime as you are."

"But how am I to know anything of the kind?"

"My word, William; did it ever fail you? I swear to you, as I shall answer to that Being whose eye alone saw the deed, that she is absolutely pure of it, whatever the evidence may appear to prove to you! Will you, for my sake, use your utmost efforts to lead the jury to a verdict of acquittal?"

"This is really absurd, John."

"Then, I see, I must tell you the whole story."

He rose, opened the door, looked out, secured it, returned, and commenced in a low half-whisper a narrative that speedily arrested and absorbed the attention of his hearer.

When he had done, the latter heaved a deep sigh, as if relieved from a weight. The expression of feature with which he looked at him, too, was altogether changed from that with which he had regarded him at his first entrance.

"And now," said the stranger, "are you convinced of her innocence?"

“ I am—I am.”

“ And you will endeavour to procure her acquittal ?”

“ I will ; I consider it a duty ; and did I not believe that your motive was not what the world would judge it, I would consider it a duty to—”

“ Betray me, Will ?”

“ Give you up to public justice ; but I could not do it. Alas ! we have been friends from childhood ! Your crime has been great and unnatural ; but you have trusted to my affection. I will use all just measures to bring off your unhappy victim ; your own punishment I will leave in the hands of Him who alone can inflict a penalty adequate to such a deed.”

“ Yes—you see it *here* :” and he snatched a quantity of hair from his head with his fingers, and held it out.

It was iron-grey in colour, and came away with ease, as if the roots had been withered, and yet his features were those of a very young man—indeed, little beyond boyhood.

“ Would you know the mark of Cain ?” he continued ; “ look in my face. But what was Cain to me ? He only slew his brother. Great God, what will become of me ?”

“And now,” said the other, after a pause, “I pray you will leave this house, and never again come near me. It is no lessening of my personal friendship for you, but that crime, that dogs you like a hideous Doppelganger—we can never again be companions—I cannot associate with a—a—a—”

“The dreadful syllables stick in your throat, Will. Good bye !”

“Farewell, indeed, John ; better fortune attend you, and may your sins and sorrows lie light upon your breast ! Before you go, I would recommend you to get young B—— to plead for her.”

“He is already retained.”

“Farewell ! God be with you !”

“Farewell !—Farewell !”

The trial was a long one, and ended in her acquittal. This was owing as much to the turn given to the evidence by repeated questions from the foreman of the jury, as to the masterly pleading of Mr. B——.

The history of Leah—her personal delicacy and weakness—the fact of her clothes, as well as the weapon she had grasped, apparently in her defence, being altogether unstained with blood—the nature of Basil’s wound—his atrocious private character, were all parti-

cularly dwelt upon ; and the result was that she was sent free from the bar, the crime being wrapped in as much obscurity as ever.

About a month after this, a young surgeon sat alone, very disconsolate, in a shop he had opened as an apothecary and general practitioner, in a remote corner of the liberties of Westminster. He was cursed with that bane to success in practice, a juvenile face and appearance ; and he was bitterly reflecting how long it would be ere time would bless his features with a wrinkle, when a young man entered to purchase some drugs.

It was the same darkly-dressed individual I have just described. The materials he bought were of a chemical nature, and he stated his intention of using them for certain experiments. He made this a means of drawing the young surgeon into a lengthened conversation, with the view of sounding the extent of his skill.

Day after day he returned, purchasing continually various ingredients, and daily taking the opportunity to discourse upon medical subjects. At length he stated his desire that he should leave his business, and go with him to attend a case at a distant part of the

country. The other objected, stating his determination that, if his practice did not succeed, it should be from no want of attention or perseverance on his part.

The stranger urged that his was a portion of that very business he was so anxious to advance—indeed, his earliest important case. This, and other representations, backed by a twenty-pound note laid on the table, immediately resolved him what course to adopt. Leaving his surgery in charge of a former fellow-student, he started next day for a professional excursion, he knew not whither. They left in a travelling carriage, went westward from London, and journeyed two days.

I may state that the stranger had before informed him of the nature of the case, and he was prepared to treat a female patient. He found her living in a little place, half town, half village, in a secluded district of country to which he was unable then to give a name. He was struck by her exceeding beauty, by her unusually melancholy and despondent feelings, and her extreme meekness of deportment.—It was Leah Meriel.

His employer continued in daily attendance upon

her, and they spent long periods of time in conversation together. Their demeanour towards each other was marked by a most dove-like tenderness—unaltering on her part—on his, broken by wild outbursts of frantic passion. Often he would sit by her for hours, while they talked earnestly together; then, on a sudden, he would drop on his knees by her bedside, and, burying his face among the clothes or curtains, groan aloud. At other times, he started up, pressed his clenched hands against his temples, and rushed across and across the room.

Such fits Leah allowed to go on for a little, when usually her mild, pensive “John, love!” would bring him to her side calm in spirit, even though his frame was trembling and sinking, from the overpowering emotion that had recently been racking it. His room was over the surgeon’s, and all night long he could be heard pacing about, talking to himself, and sometimes giving way to long fits of loud lamentation.

At length this gentleman was informed that his immediate aid was required. It was in the night, and next morning his patient lay, buried in a deep sleep, with her first-born nestling in her bosom.

That morning he sat by the window, apparently

much embarrassed and disquieted. He had a trying task before him—one for which his youth and inexperience scarcely fitted him.

The infant was malformed, and it is a hard thing to tell a father that his first—his long-wished and hoped-for son—is—*monstrous*—a world's wonder—a thing to pity and be ashamed of. Pray Heaven you may never have to make such a communication, and, much more, that such a communication may never have to be made to you.

The deformity in this case was of a most striking and mysterious description : it was a deficiency of the frontal bone or plate of the forehead, the middle part of which was entirely wanting, allowing the pulsations of the brain to be both felt and seen through the soft skin. But this was not all : the skin was disfigured with a large deep *red blotch*, of that description called, by the common people, wine-mark, or sometimes, blood-mark. A *blood-mark*, in this case, it was indeed ! This stain covered the whole brow above the eyes. In other respects the child was healthy and well formed.

At length he rose. He appeared to have nerved himself to the proper pitch, and, going cautiously to the door, he went out and sought another apartment.

Here he found his employer, who had been afoot all night. The usual questions as to the health of the two objects of his care were put to him with much earnestness and anxiety. At length he began.—

“But there is one fact which I think it is as well to inform you of at once, as probably it might be the cause of a very painful scene, if you found it out yourself hereafter without being forewarned.”

The other grew pale, and rose slowly to his feet.

“The child is slightly malformed.”

His dark visage became actually yellow, while the peculiar glaring lustre filled his eyes, and he moved slightly, as if dizzy.

“The forehead is blotched with a *blood-mark*, and the bone there is *wanting*.”

The last syllable had hardly left his lips, when his hearer sprang at his throat, seized his collar with both hands, and shook him violently, screaming through his fixed teeth,—

“Scoundrel—villain — miserable hound!—do you think by such a wretched trick to make me with my own lips betray myself, like one of your hospital idiots?”

The surgeon was taken unawares, but, having

learned a few things more than medicine in his student-life, and being withal a well-made, muscular young man, he at once grappled with his opponent, and, after a short struggle, forcibly thrust him down into a chair.

“Sir,” said he, “I am surprised—astonished, that you should so egregiously commit yourself!”

“Excuse me, doctor,” said the other, letting go his collar, while a deep blush covered his face, changing quickly to a livid shade. “Pardon me—I was not quite myself—I am all right now. Forgive me, my dear sir.”

Here he poured himself out a glass of wine from a decanter that stood on a side-table.

“Go on ; I am prepared for whatever you have to tell. I regret, exceedingly, I should have got so excited.”

The surgeon proceeded to detail the particulars of the case more at length, in terms which he was well aware, from his former interviews with him, he understood.

When he had done, a conversation ensued, in which he was asked if he had thought of anything that could have caused this deformity. He replied, that it ap-

peared to him to be an arrest of development of the bone, and explained the usual process of formation. He added that the cause of it could not be divined. After this he was about to withdraw, when his employer detained him to inquire at what time he thought Leah would have strength to hear some very disagreeable news. He replied, that, taking into consideration her extreme delicacy of constitution, it would be advisable to put off for a couple of weeks or so all such communication.

“Then, doctor, till that period you will stay here, I have no doubt; and, let me assure you, a proper value will be put on your time.”

It was several days before Leah discovered the deformity of her infant. The surgeon had caused the nurse to bind a fillet of cloth over its brow, and it was an easy thing to persuade the simple, girlish mother that such a proceeding was necessary in all cases. She was sitting up in bed, nursing and fondling the child, her beautiful face giving evidence once more of an almost perfect happiness, when, with a sudden gambol, it dislodged the cloth, and the hideous pulsating blotch became apparent.

Leah shrieked aloud and fell back upon the couch.

The doctor immediately flew to her side : in a hurried manner he explained to her that there was in the case no immediate danger to life, all the evil lying in the deformity. She heard this, but made no reply, only pressing the infant closer to her bosom. After a while—

“Alas, doctor !” said she ; “you do not know what I know. It will be a sore sight for him.”

“He is already aware of it,” said her attendant.

“And how did he bear it ?”

“Why, well enough : he was a little moved ; but such is to be expected.”

“Poor, poor John !” and she gave way to a long fit of silent weeping.

But this discovery seemed only to have fixed her affections more firmly to her child : a more devoted mother could not exist. It seemed as if they were still but parts of the same being. She never lost sight of it for one instant, and when the little darling smiled upon her, a glow settled on her features of perfect joy, not the less intense, that sighs followed and sorrow seemed interwoven with it.

At length, the surgeon having informed his employer that she was now in a state of health to hear,

without danger, any communication he might have in view, he was dismissed as he had been brought, while the liberality of his remuneration heightened the feelings of curiosity and suspicion wherewith he had regarded the whole proceedings.

The afternoon of that day Fairy Leah sat at the window of her room, caressing her child, and singing and talking to it. The young man she called John entered and took his seat beside her. He seemed labouring under the weight of some tidings he did not know how to break, appeared moody and embarrassed, and his dark features were knit as if every muscle were strung. She looked at him with an expression of fondness, anxiety, and fear.

“Leah,” said he, “you love your child.”

She made no reply, but pressed it to her heart as she held it, continuing to regard him with a more intense degree of the same expression.

“You must *part with it*, dearest,” he went on. “Listen to me, Leah: that child is destined to murder me, and will do it, sooner or later. Look at that hideous mark on its brow: could you live with such a damning memorandum continually before your eyes? Yes, so certain as it exists will that boy put me to

death. I know this by a strange instinct that has taken possession of me, which I cannot explain to you or understand myself. But nothing is to be despaired of. I will take every measure to protract—if possible, to prevent it;—not on my own account, Heaven knows! but on account of him. I would not have him suffer what I do—I would not have him bear that death-agony of soul with life of body—remorse—”

“ John, John,” cried she, her eyes filling with tears, “ your afflictions have unsettled your mind.”

“ No, my mind is not like other people’s, or I should have long ago sunk into an idiot, or have given myself up, to rid me honestly of this torment! No, its power of feeling misery is unimpaired—my mind is unchanged! You must part with the child. I have found a decent person, who, with her husband, is about to emigrate to the woods of America. She has lost a child of nearly the same age, and will take yours and rear it up where it will never hear of its hapless parents.”

“ No,” she cried, springing to her feet, “ I will go with it myself to America, or where you please, and rear it as you wish; but no power shall ever separate me from my child!”

“ *I will separate you ! You must go with me, and think no more of that miserable offspring of crime and sorrow. Dearest, dearest Leah, I cannot part with you. You are as it were the soul to my body,—to part from you were death indeed ! We will seek together an unknown spot in some remote part of the world, where I may haply elude the steps of that young avenger of blood.*”

“ No, no, no, John ! I cannot do it. I love you dearly ; but where my child goes, there I go also ;—is it not part of my own being ?”

“ Nay, you judge erroneously, Leah ; your affection for your child is a mere animal instinct : our love is a passion of our minds. It must be as I say ; I have considered it deeply and dispassionately, and it is the only measure which promises aught like safety. It will be hard for you, I own ; but, one pang, and it is over,—much happiness, at least alleviation of misery, may yet be before us.”

Leah tried every argument, every endearment, and every appeal, to alter this determination, but without avail. It was indeed an affecting sight to see the youthful mother, kneeling in an agony of supplication that her offspring might not be exiled from her bosom.

But he was inexorable, and assured her that next day was the last he could spare it to her.

She begged he would leave her alone till the latest moment she could be with it. He acquiesced, and rose to leave her. She called him to her as he was going, and kissed him warmly. He was surprised at this, especially after what had just passed between them, but turned and left the room.

Next day, toward the afternoon, he again entered that apartment, to tell her the people were come who were to bear away from her her child. She was not there. He tapped at the door of the inner chamber—no answer! He pushed it open and went in. It, too, was empty. She had escaped away—was gone!

He stood for a while motionless in body—but oh! the fierce tumult that was whirling and eddying in his mind! After he had remained thus for a little, with a loud groan he threw himself upon the bed, and gave way to a torrent of self-reproaches and curses. At length, starting up, he called for his horse, and rode away furiously along the roads, in the hope of overtaking the fugitive. This plan he pursued for several days, going out and riding all over the neighbourhood, carefully examining every passenger. But it was

without success, and he gave up the endeavour. He immediately left the place, and never more was seen in that part of the country.

About thirty years after the last detailed events, the acting partner in the firm of Basil and Company, paper manufacturers, died suddenly. He left no son to inherit his share in the concern, and, moreover, the business was at his death involved in some intricacy.

In consequence of this, the solicitors of Mr. Basil, who had been almost all his life abroad, in communicating to him the state of his affairs, recommended him immediately to return to England, and himself take the management, or engage with another competent partner.

Their answer was his appearance at their place of business, about six months after their letter was despatched. He appeared to be a man between fifty and sixty years of age, much bent, with staid, careworn, pensive features, and a circlet of gray, or rather white hair, round about his bald crown. His manners were quiet and unobtrusive; his look absent and reflective; his whole aspect that of a rather intellectual person.

He now assumed the management of the factory where his youth had been passed, and appeared desirous of devoting his whole attention to it. He found many alterations in the works, and himself proceeded to make many more.

The old house by the reservoir, now a complete ruin, he caused to be removed, and in its place, and with its materials partly, he had constructed a school for the children of his operatives. He did not take up his abode at Whitestream Lodge; in fact that house had been let to a tenant, a merchant of Bristol, and his lease would not expire for some years to come.

He set about building a cottage, and selected for its site a spot on the south side of the wood that inclosed the dell of Whitestream, the very fields which I have early in the tale alluded to. Having furnished this place, and provided it with a library and scientific apparatus, he settled here, devoting himself to the study of mechanics, especially as relating to his own peculiar branch of manufacture. His whole time was yielded up to this study, and the result was, that several curious pieces of mechanism were put on trial, and finally into continual use, at Whitestream. The consequence of this was, that the greater part of the

work, formerly performed by labour of hand, was now executed in half the time, and in an infinitely superior manner, by machinery of iron and wood, and three-fourths of the workmen were thrown out of employment.

A powerful and bitter resentment was raised against Mr. Basil on this account in the minds of the labourers ; but, persuaded in his own mind of the ultimate benefit to mankind of the substitution of machinery for manual labour, he not only disregarded this, but, having first patented his inventions, endeavoured to spread them as widely as possible.

In a certain district in the North of England, in the neighbourhood of a great manufacturing town, there are several extensive paper-works. The proprietors of these, having been induced to try Mr. Basil's patent, were so well pleased with its working as to invite him to a public dinner before his leaving the place, after seeing his machines put in action. He had received many threatening letters from those whom his invention had for the time deprived of their living, and he was given to understand that a combination for his destruction was afoot among them.

This, however, did not in any degree affect him,

and, without taking the slightest notice of it, or even making any precaution, he went to the party, amid the hootings of an immense crowd of labouring people of every description, that beset the neighbourhood.

The hall in which it was held was the ball-room of one of the principal hotels in the place. It had two large windows opening to the street, and two into a wide grassy space in its rear. These latter were thrown open to admit the air. About forty gentlemen dined, and the evening had passed in toasts and complimentary speeches. Mr. Basil was remarked to preserve throughout a calm and habitually melancholy expression, though not at all such as to depress the general hilarity. How much then were the company surprised when, on a sudden, they saw him start into a listening posture, while his face assumed a look of surprise, anxiety, and deep attention. Presently his feelings appeared roused to a pitch of extreme excitement, and, while every eye was fixed upon him in silent wonder, he apologised to the chairman, stating that, under the open windows, he heard a voice speak and a name mentioned which brought to his memory scenes long since past, and raised in his mind a curiosity of which he could not resist the gratification.

Thereupon, rising, he went quickly to the window, and, bending forward, looked out. The next instant he staggered rapidly back, and, uttering a scream so strangely loud and thrilling that the glasses on the table quivered and rang, fell senseless on the floor.

All immediately sprang up and flew to his assistance. They found his face covered with what appeared to them a quantity of mud, especially his eyes were completely filled with it. Those parts of the features not reached were of a burning scarlet hue, and his black neckerchief and the collar of his coat were sprinkled with vivid red stains.

They could not divine what this was, till one, attempting to wipe it away, had his fingers burnt. It was a large quantity of the strongest *oil of vitriol*, *mixed with sand*. A cry of horror arose in that hall, so recently ringing with shouts of conviviality, and at once all was confusion, uproar, indecision, wonder, fear.

Some cried out to fix and barricade the doors; others, to send to the barracks and call out a guard of soldiers. Some crowded round the prostrate gentleman; others ran hither and thither about the great apartment, unknowing what to do or where to fly.

At length a gentleman present, who had been exerting himself to produce something like order, succeeded in pressing, as it were, two terrified waiters to bring cold water, wherewith to dilute and wash away the acid. He was a surgeon, and the leading person of that profession in the place.

He had him then removed upstairs to one of the bed-rooms of the hotel, and renewed his sanative endeavours. But it was plainly of no avail—the hellish scheme had been too well concocted and too adroitly executed. The sand had found its way into the eyes and deep into the nostrils. Part of the face was already a black, burnt, lifeless mass, and it was plain that sloughing or mortification must spread to a fearful extent. The eyes!—they were already *burnt out*—there was no hope for them. Was there hope for life?—the surgeon shook his head.

Shortly the unfortunate sufferer recovered consciousness: the agony he now endured must have been dreadful; and though he appeared a man who had great control over his feelings, yet his groans were so harrowing that several people living at the hotel immediately left it for other establishments.

For twenty-four hours this continued; then the pain

ceased—for why?—the nerves were dead. The flesh of his face was now a burnt, lifeless mass, and was fast beginning to separate from the bone.

But now he commenced to talk in a strange way. His attendants took it for delirium, but the surgeon, as he listened, heard names and circumstances mentioned with which he recollected himself being involved in early youth, which had been graven, as it were, with an iron pen in his memory. His attention was aroused, and soon he became convinced that his patient was the same by whom, half a lifetime before, he had been so mysteriously employed in London. He spoke to him, and endeavoured to recall himself to his recollection. From that instant the delirium ceased—the poor sufferer spoke no longer of old things—no further did he rave of remorse or vengeance—no more did he murmur the gentle name of Leah Meriel.

“Has the man been taken, doctor?” at length he asked.

“No; it would seem the conspiracy has been so darkly wrought up that there is no lighting upon the actual perpetrator. They only wait for a description of his person from you to trace him out and have him brought to punishment.”

“I can give no description !”

“A very large reward has been offered for his apprehension, but hitherto without success ; and, as most of the men out of employ are emigrating, it is possible he may find his way out of the country before suspicion fairly alights upon him.”

“God grant it !”

In a clean, though scantily-furnished apartment of a one-story house, on the outside of the town, sat an elderly woman, alone. A table was beside her, with a large old Bible upon it, and a pair of spectacles laid in the fold of the leaves. A lamp hung by a wire from a hook in the ceiling above it, and a small fire was glowing in the chimney. It was past midnight.

She sat in a musing posture, her head leaning on her hand, and her eyes fixed upon the fire. The fender, part of the ring of an old carriage-wheel, supported a couple of small feet, which, from their elegance of shape, along with the little hand, now marked with prominent blue veins, that rested on her knees, could have belonged only to Fairy Leah. It was she.

As she sat, she uttered, apparently without being conscious of it, her thoughts aloud.

“Alas! will he never reform?—will he never become what he was? Not a night that he comes home to me but he is mad with liquor! No change—no amendment—no hope! Woe is my heart—my child is become worse to me than ever my mother was! How shall I soothe him, and get him peaceably to bed?”

Here she heard the door opened—a foot hurried stealthily along the passage, and she rose to her feet to be on her guard as her son entered the room.

He was a tall, besotted-looking young man, with a heavy fur cap drawn down over his eyes. He stood for a moment, and then slipped down on a chest close to the wall, his features wearing a look of extreme excitement, which, to her eyes, was palpably more than that of drunkenness. She stood looking at him, uncertain what to think or do, overpowered with anxiety and apprehension.

“Mother!” said he, in a low, hoarse voice, while he trembled exceedingly, “*I have killed a man!*”

The agitation of the poor woman was extreme. She attempted to speak, but could not, while she clutched

the back of the chair she had risen from, to prevent her from falling to the ground.

“They made me do it,” he continued. “The card turned up ‘John Meriel,’ and we had all sworn. Oh, my God! how different it looks now when it is done, from what it did before! Mother, I am in mortal fear!” and he gave way to a flood of weeping, while she stood gazing at him, struck to the very heart.

“What is it you have done, John?” at length she uttered.

“That man who set up the machines at the mills, that have made us beggars:—the man from some place in ——shire,—Basil is his name.”

“Mercy!” she screamed, putting one hand suddenly to her head.

“I have done for him!”

She fell to the floor as if she had been shot.

He sat still for a few minutes, looking at her with a stupid stare. Then, rising, he lifted her up and laid her on the bed in a corner of the place, and resumed his seat on the chest.

The second day after the commission of this crime, a quiet, poor, genteel-looking woman presented herself at the hotel where Basil lay. She inquired if he

were yet living. The porter replied that he was still alive and sensible.

“Tell him that a woman is here who very much desires to see him. Her name is Leah Meriel, of ——shire.”

The man went directly, not to him, but to the surgeon. On hearing the name mentioned, a strange chain of recollections and surmises arose in his mind, which, combined with what he had gathered from the murmurings of his patient, produced a mass of most unpleasant suspicions, fears, and doubts. He immediately gave instructions to admit her. And yet he repented of this shortly.

“Such an interview is certain, if all be as I think, to hurry his dissolution. But again, there is no hope, and how am I to know whether this matter is not something it may ease his dying moments to have settled?”

He accordingly introduced her, having first mentioned to him the fact of her presence.

She found him laid on his bed, the whole of his face covered with dressings and bandages, his mouth only being free, to allow of his breathing.

“Is it you, Leah?” said he, much moved.

“It is, John,” she replied, and sank upon a chair by the bedside, taking hold of his hand with both of hers.

The surgeon withdrew,—the hired nurse at the time happened to be absent.

“Leah,” said he, “I thought you had been long ago laid in your grave. Have you not forgotten me—now? I am sure there was little of good in me to be loved so much.”

“Forgot you, John! Heaven knows I never loved any human being save you and my miserable son!”

“And after thirty years separation, now, when you find me an aged, mangled, dying wretch, do you talk to me in this way?”

“Yes, John, if an eternity were to pass away, could I do aught but still love you—and your child, though he has been to me as anything but yours. Alas! from first to last, what a life I have led!”

“Comfort yourself, Leah. You have lived sinlessly, and endured your trials with meekness. There is rest for you in futurity—though not for one so fearfully stained as I am.”

He paused—he was very weak.

“Is it not an awful thing, Leah, to be dying with such thoughts as these?”

She gave way to a gush of weeping.

“What a fearful account I have to render!” he continued. “Did I not, when I had the rearing of your young mind, teach you evil and not good?”

“Alas! John, you taught me to love you—the rest was all my own.”

“And that crime the most heinous erring man can commit! Did I not slaughter him—send him to judgment unwarned—and he the *father that begot me*? Has not the great Father dreadfully punished the deed. Did not his finger write on my boy’s brow the command ‘*Avenge*’—and see how he has fulfilled it. Yes, Leah, ere his hand did *this* to me, I could see, in the moonlight, the curse graven on his forehead!”

There was a long pause.

At length he said, in a calmer tone—

“Leah, there is something yet to be done.”

At that moment the surgeon entered the room. He was about to take leave for the time, and stated he would look in again in the evening.

“Doctor,” said the patient, “is Mr. — still in

the house? I have changed my mind, and have something to bequeath."

"I will send for him immediately;" and, after looking to the dressings, he withdrew.

The lawyer arrived shortly after, and with his aid he settled upon Leah a certain annuity, the rest of his large property going to a distant relation, a manufacturer of Manchester. When this was done, he was much exhausted. After some minutes, when the gentleman was gone, he desired the waiting-woman to leave the room till she was rung for, and, once more, these two strange beings were left alone together.

Leah, who had now had time to recover from the feelings that at first overpowered her, endeavoured to fill his mind with thoughts and hopes suitable for one in his situation. May we trust she was successful!

"You were, what the world calls, the ruin of my youth," said she; "but if I, a frail, erring creature of clay, have forgiven and loved you so sincerely, how greatly more will He pardon who is himself Mercy and Love?" In this strain did her quiet, sweet voice pour balm into the wounds of his spirit. Grant it, Heaven! May my death-bed have such a comforter!

All this while he was rapidly sinking. At length he

said, in a voice so low and weak as scarcely to be heard even by her wakéful ears, “ Yes, I begin to think there may be yet mercy for me, and that He has sent you, an angel of goodness and love, to tell me of it, and to throw a halo of hope around my deathbed. I am dying. Do not call any one. I should wish to die as I desired to live, in your presence only, Leah. But don’t be alarmed. It is so easy! I feel just as if I was awakening from a dream, only the process of change is slower.”

“ God grant you may awaken from the short, fevered dream of this world to a bright, everlasting reality !”

“ Amen, Leah !—but it is a hard thing to part from you again, when I had found you after so long a separation.”

This was uttered slowly, and almost by syllables.

In a paroxysm of unsuppressible emotion, she threw herself on the bed. When the fit was over, and allowed her to observe, she saw he breathed no longer. He was dead. And such was the death-bed of a PAR-
RICIDE !

His body was conveyed to Whitestream, and laid in a little gothic tomb he had himself caused to be constructed, in the churchyard of the parish.

Leah, by the help of the annuity he had left her, followed to that place. She did not long linger behind him. Within a year, she too had sunk. It was her latest request that she should be buried in the same grave with him ; but this, from the prejudices of his friends, could not be complied with. The country people, however, made her grave close on the outside of the wall of the tomb ; and there she lies, without stone or inscription, or even a flower to record her existence. Whether these things are of consequence to her now, however, I leave, reader, to your quiet thoughts.

As for her son, his fate is unknown to me. Three persons were taken for the crime, but he was not one of them. Two, to whom the connexion with the conspiracy could be partly brought home, were imprisoned for six months each—the third was set free. It is to be believed, either that some accident befel him, or that he escaped from the country with the emigrants.

CHAPTER XIV.



AN OLD SOLDIER'S STORY.

I HAVE always been a great fancier of those who lead a wandering life—who have no regular home, but travel on foot some twenty miles daily, pick up a meal where they can and how they can,

And at night in barn or stable—

For the rest of the quotation, which has escaped my memory, *vide* Burns.

I do not mean your regular gipsies, with their tents, dogs, donkeys, and black-eyed witches of daughters—with them I beg to decline an intimacy—but your ballad-singers, basket-bearers, rag and old brass collectors, and the whole train that mingle a small spice of industry with their vagabondizing.

It was my fortune once to live for a few days at a

large war seaport in the west country, and, having nothing to do when the pen was out of my fingers, I passed the time, of an afternoon and evening, in walking about the roads in the neighbourhood. There was a particular little inn, at a village about five miles distant, that generally formed the “point turnagain” of these excursions, being an especial favourite with me, on account as much of the cheerful kitchen fire-side, and the first-rate home-brewed ale—which all but reminded me of the nectareous fluids of classic Edinburgh, as of its garrulous landlord, his smart daughter, and the crowd of originals that used to be assembled—an admirable study for one who, like me, was a scribbler to his trade.

It was one evening—a somewhat frosty one—in the end of autumn, that I was seated here by the fire, enjoying a pint of beer, and mingling the smoke of my Manilla with fumes of every scent, from pipes of all sizes and ages, listening the while with greedy ears to a deep discussion of the new poor-law, kept up by three or four profound thinkers, in the shape of a road-labourer, a ditcher, a cobbler, and a travelling umbrella-mender.

The last happened to have one side of the question,

and had to look out against all three ; but he was an old soldier, kept a sharp eye on their manœuvres, and by a skilful shifting of his front, and a well-directed fire of *jaw*, managed to repel all their attacks in the argument.

My interest, which had been drawn by his dexterity in the debate, and by the fact of his views on the question coinciding with my own, was heightened by the gallant alacrity with which he jumped from his seat in the chimney corner to allow a poor travelling woman, with a child in her arms, to get close to the fire ; and still more so by the discovery that he had a daughter with him, a pretty little girl of ten years old, the elegance of whose juvenile form the ragged dress she wore could not conceal.

They took the road together, he carrying a wooden box on his back, and a bundle of umbrellas, in various stages of decomposition, under his arm, and she bearing a small basket, containing, as I afterwards discovered, writing-paper, ribbons, and halfpenny pictures. I shortly left the inn likewise, and about half-way to the town I overtook them. They were standing in front of another little alehouse, and, as they shivered outside, the bright glare of the kitchen fire seemed a temptation too strong for resistance.

I found they were calculating the gains of the day, and speculating whether another “three ha’porth” of beer could not be screwed out of them without setting the “old woman a fretting.” These gains, I found, amounted to elevenpence-halfpenny precisely ; a silver sixpence and three copper pence being his share of the earnings, and hers amounting to twopence-halfpenny.

Now the question to go in or not was just on the “razor’s edge,” as the ancients used to say—they were hesitating right before the door—neither said a word, but once or twice, as he stood, methought I saw him lean forward, as if he would have put out his right foot to march in ; and as his honest, fatherly face looked at his little daughter, I was certain that another shrug of her shoulders would decide the matter.

“My good fellow,” said I, “I perceive your dilemma, and, young as I may seem, I assure you I have already known what it is to look at comfort without the power to purchase it. I am but an adventurer like yourself, and, though I be in somewhat better luck at present, I don’t think that it is any reason why you should refuse to drink a pint of beer hot at my expense, and warm the toes of your little girl. When shall I have such a fine child I wonder !”

“Many thanks to you, sir, for your kindness ; there’s no pride about me.”

And in we went forthwith. In a minute we were seated on a bench beside the fire, each with his beer and “baccy,” and the little girl at our feet, with a whacking piece of bread and cheese in her gripe, from which, hungry as she was, her kind heart could not help sparing a little bit now and then to the house-dog, which lay on the hearth with his head in her lap.

The conversation was replete with interest. He had been twenty years a soldier, in all sorts of climates, and gave me a curious account of the life led by officers and privates—officers’ ladies, and soldiers’ wives—in a marching regiment. Moreover, he gave me a complete view of the theory, and not a little insight into the practice, of umbrella vamping, explaining to me all his tools and materials and their various uses.

With his little daughter likewise I had some conversation. She had been to school, and could read, as she proved upon the little books and pictures she sold ; and could write a little, too, she told me, only she found the capital letters somewhat troublesome.

When he got up and was about to start, anxious to get home to his “old woman,” I begged to offer him

a Chinchinopoli cheroot, by way of a change after his pipe.

“Ah,” said he, “this puts me in mind of the East Indies—I was eight years out there.”

“And many a strange adventure you must have had,” said I.

“I believe you,” quoth he; “many a rum yarn I could tell you about that quarter of the world.”

“I should be delighted to hear one,” said I, as we left the house. “It will be a most agreeable accompaniment to our walk into the town.”

Thereupon he lighted his cheroot from mine, and we walked on, while he, between the puffs, came out with the paragraphs of the following story, which I shall entitle

THE MYSTERIOUS CORPORAL.

I ONCE had a comrade, and he was the rummest character you ever saw; a right queer customer he was, and I'd defy ever a white man to fathom who he was, or what he would be at. He was continually laughing and sneering at somebody or something, often having a hit at myself, I believe, when I was not by. For all that we were prime chums, and the reason he

tackled to me was that we two were the only men that could read and write in the company. A first-class scholar he was, let me tell you, and could jabber foreign lingos like winkin'—nay, one night over a can of rack-punch he swore to me that he had once been a professor of something or other at the college of Goitagain,* in Jarmany, but had to cut his stick for running down Religion, and being a Carabineero† as he called it. He had been a sergeant, I knew, in our own corps, but was broke for laughing at Ensign Spoon, and giving “cheek” when he was brought up.

He had the oddest name—what do you think it was?—Oh, you'd never guess it—it was Nicholas Flannel‡—though whether that was the name he was christened by, or whether he ever was christened at all, whoever knows, I don't.

He was about my height, but thin as a lath, and agile as a rock-lizard ; dark complexioned, small faced,

* Göttingen probably the old soldier meant.

† Carbonaro, a secret society for political purposes, ramified through Italy, France, and Germany, but existing in its greatest vigour in the kingdom of the two Sicilies, between A.D. 1790 and 1820.

‡ Nicholas Flammell, a renowned alchemist of the fourteenth century.

and black eyed, with a towering brow and head, that used to run up into his shako as a bag'net would into its scabbard; and though he was a man of forty, I'm blessed if you would not take him for a lad of twenty.

Well, we used to have the queerest conversations: he used to talk like a rum 'un about all sorts of things—such as the sodgerical* signs—which mayhap you knows of—affirming there was a quarrier† in the sky, and a vargin, and a library, and fishes, and scales; and all manner of diseases, such as cancers, which he said were the same as crabs; and all sorts of medicines, too, such as mercury, castor, and what not.

You may think from this that he believed heaven to be an hospital, but in half a shake he would prove it to be a regular wild-beast show, and point you out lions, scorpions, bears, dragons, and all sorts of unconscionable varmin.

Then how he used to jaw about Religion! It seems quite awful to me now, though I did not care so much about it then as a man does when he comes to the age of discretion and is the father of a family.

He would talk to me, too, by the hour, about old hea-

* Zodiacal, in all probability.

† Aquarius.

then gods—Mars and Venus and Neptune—whom he said the sailors used to retain ceremonies about to this day ; and about Stonehenge, over there on Salisbury Plain ; and about the Druids, or some such name ; and about some wooden * god that he said our Wednesday took its name from. He would lecture, too, about Norh's ark, and the flood, which he said was a corruption † of the Muddyterratin sea.

Oh my eyes what a head his was for all manner of larnin', and how I used to be carried away with his discourse ! I declare to you I would rather listen to him than see a play any day of the week ; and I think it was this that made him so much my crony—the listening to him that is—for never a soul but myself in the regiment did he care to say a word to, barrin' in way of fun or jeering like. He was always a running down the officers, and poking his fun at them for ignorance, that is, when they were not looking at him—all except the doctor—he had some respect for him, because he used to go about taking off on paper all the

* Woden.

† Irruption—alluding to the theory that the deluge was produced by the Atlantic bursting in between Gibraltar and Mount Abyla, and forming the Mediterranean.

pagodas and caves and old ruined figures of stone ; but even that was not to speak of.

He was a great freemason too, and was deeper in that craft than any man ever I know'd of:—but you are not a freemason—(“ How the deuce has he found that out ? ” thought I)—and in course I cannot say much about it ; but he used to talk concernin' that order in a way the like I never heard, and would tell me about the times when the art of building and working in stone was in its best days, when all these caves were dug, and temples built, and everything else was so far behind that the very people that could build pyramids like mountains, could not go to sea in a boat, or make a firelock ; hardly even could weave a decent rag of broad cloth to—hillo, Nan ! where are you running to ? that gig will be over you, girl—don't you see the lights coming up ?

He could tell long stories about the kings that lived in those old times, and their wars and dreadful battles, to which Waterloo was no more than a skrimmage ; and how they were made gods when they died—such as Bacchus, who was another Boney, and not a drunken old sot as some people think ; and Vulcan, the god of the smiths, who was the same as the Tubal Cain that

you read of in the Bible ; and Nimrod, and the other king that built Babylon ; and a king of Persia that invented magic and prophesying by the stars, and praying to the sun, just the same as the Parsees do at Bombay, and whose name was ‘Sorrow-a-star,’* if I’m not wrong. Oh, there was no end to the stories ; and so divertin’ were they that they would nail you to the spot hearkening to him for hours.

He affirmed he could read all the marks and signs on the old temples and pagodas, the hieroglyphics † you know, and said they were all about mathewmatics ; and the moon, and stars, and eclipses, and measuring, and laws ; and he assured me that the laws made in those old times were much better than those now, for that then there was no such thing as getting your nob in chancery for all your lifetime, but that laws were made for giving justice, not, as now, to maintain thirty thousand individuals, who, he said, make their bread out of what is called the glorious certainty.

There never was an hour that we had to ourselves,

* Zoroaster, most likely.

† If it be wondered how the old soldier got this big word out so well, be it remembered that he was a freemason, and any brothers who read this will know that the word is a common one in the mouths of the craft.

but, in place of drinking or smoking away the time, he would go wandering by day or night among the ruins, poking about among the long-eared stone gods, and shoving his fingers into the scratches and lines on the blocks, to clear out moss ; and sometimes he would get quite nervous and shaky, like a man in a passion,—quite elevated,—as he went about among the secret inscriptions. Nay, when I sometimes would for banter's sake say I did not believe a word of all his yarns about the old gods, he would come out with a word or sentence in some strange gibberish to one of the Gentoo priests as he passed, that would make him start and stare as if he saw a ghost ; while Flannel would go jeering and scoffing, swearing he had pronounced words which were only known to Brahmins of the highest order, and had been kept secret by the dreadfulest penalties for thousands of years.

Well—once when we were lying at Benares, a place as full of old monuments as any churchyard, three or four companies of us were marched to a village about fifteen miles distant, where the ryots—that's the small farmers like, though why they called them by that name I could never think, for a more peaceable set of folks arn't nowhere. Well, these ryots were grumbling

a little at a new tax-gatherer that had been put over them, and it was thought that a sight of our red-coats would make them come down with their sicca rupees a little quicker.

We began our march in the morning early, and halted to pass the noon at a small collection of bamboo houses, about half-way. There was a little creek of a river ran through this place, finding its way to the Ganges; not a muddy sort of thing, but quite clear, and fordable anywhere, though it was crossed by a wooden bridge built by the Company. Well, as soon as we had piled arms and dismissed for a time, this same corporal and I lighted our "baccies," and away we rambled up the banks of the creek.

When we had gone about a quarter of a mile from the road, we came to a low place, where there was a little hollow "airy" by the stream, covered with long grass, and backed by a high precipice. Here we found a number of old stones lying about, some of them damming up the water, so as to produce a beautiful clear little basin to bathe in. They were very ancient, sunk into the ground, and overgrown with moss and brushwood.

The water, I have said, was very clear, and there

was no mud nor weeds about the banks—nothing but white sand and pebbles; nor was there any fear of water-snakes, or anything of that sort, for we could see the bottom all about. The day was broiling hot, and the water looked so fresh and cold, and so rapid in its flow, besides, the shadow of the trees was so cool, and the grass so long, damp, and green, that we both resolved upon a bath. Off went our regimentals, and into the stream we plunged; and I'll declare to you that the whole skin of this same Nick Flannel was covered with the strangest figures and letters, and pictures of creatures done in tattooing! There were squares, and rings, and triangles, and figures like the broad arrow, and pictures of all sorts of animals—dragons and flying serpents, and sphinxes and Hindoo gods, the same as were figured on old monuments; and suns, moons, and stars; and globes covered with lines like, and snakes with their tails in their mouths, and birds, and, oh, every kind of odd object. I'll be sworn he had not a square inch of skin that was not stained in this way.

Well—out we came shortly, for it an't good to stay long in the water in these parts; and, just as we were shoving on our clothes, I noticed this fellow struck all

of a heap, like a man that comes suddenly on a venomous serpent. There he was, quite yellow in the face, for these dark people don't become pale like a Christian, but quite yellow and tawny—a sort of canary colour: there he was, trembling, and his sharp black eyes glancing like the red end of a cheroot in a dark night, as he looked here and there among the blocks of stone, and pulled away the grass from about them, and then looked at the bare face of the rock behind, and then at the blocks in the stream, and then again at those among the grass. I was wondering what was in the wind, when he jumps away, and looks up the water, and down past the rock, and then mounts on the top and looks all about,—but there was n't a soul to be seen. Presently down he comes to me, all in a hixteric way, and he says—

“ Jim,” says he, “ did you ever hear of the Pitt diamond ? ”

“ Why,” says I, “ I believe diamonds are all dug out of pits.”

“ Pshaw ! ” says he ; “ it was a stone that was sold by one Pitt to the Empress of Rooshy for half a million of money, and is worth double that any day. It was found, no one can tell how—(but I can)—in these

parts by a common soldier—one like you and I. Now hearken to me :—there is within this little hollow what would make both of us richer than e'er a king in Christendom, if we could manage to clapperclaw it without its being known we did it.”

“ Lord help me, Nick ! you don't mean that ? ”

“ Yes, but I do though—it would take us both to come at it—one could not do it, for the difficulty is too much for the strength of one ; besides, the danger is dreadful—you can't form no notion. If it were found out I did it, I would not be safe from death, and that a most horrible one, though I hid myself among the ice at the North Pole.”

“ Bless my heart ! ” said I, and I began to get excited myself ; “ what is it—how much—is it all fair and aboveboard ?—I mean, is it all honest plunder ? ”

“ I can't tell you ; let us begone from this place for the present, for every moment we stay increases the difficulty and danger.”

And away we padded down the bank to the bridge, and to the little village, where our comrades were lying in the shade, smoking and sleeping.

Well, till we got the word to fall in and march, he never ceased talking, telling me of the mighty treasure

that was to be had where we had been, and of the secret marks on the rock and stones, and of the mortal danger that hung over those that even thought of making away with such things, and about secret societies, and Brahmins and gipsies, and masonry and carbinierism, and devil knows what, till at last I got fairly funky, and made a resolution to have nothing to do with it.

What was the use of riches to me, if I could not use it without the danger of waking with a knife between my ribs, or finding poison slipping down my gizzard? Besides, it might be all very fine for a fellow that knew everything, and something more, like Nick Flannel; but for a plain man like me, contented with my station, and comfortable, why, the advantage to be gained was not equal to the risk. Besides, was it not all very likely to be nothing but bosh?

So when, shortly after nightfall, Flannel comes to me and asks me if I'm ready to go, I simply and plainly said, "I won't go, nor have anything to do with the job at all."

'Then he begged and prayed, and implored me to go with him, and promised me immense riches; but still I would not agree; and time, which he said was

of the greatest value, was running past. At last he began to call me coward and fool, so up I got and pitched into him, when he soon cried out for quarter ; and then, shaking me by the hand, he bade me farewell.

“I’m going to make the attempt by myself,” said he ; “and if I’m not back before daylight, you may report me to the sergeant ; it’s just possible it may do me some good in case I should be nailed.” So off he set, out into the darkness, and I never saw him in life again.

Well, next day, when there was no signs of him returning, I went and made my report, and you could not imagine the surprise of the officers when I told the story. Some would not believe it, others thought it a scheme to desert ; but the major ordered me to take a corporal and his guard with me, and go look for him about the bamboo-houses and all there-away.

No sooner said than done. Away we marched in search of him ; and I can assure you I felt very queer, for poor Nick, with all his ways of jeering and poking fun at a body, was a tiptop good fellow, and I had a very strong friendship for him ; besides, he was a step

above me, and above most folks I have ever seen, in the way of brains and learning, so that I was a little proud I had been so much in his confidence.

We searched all over the bamboo-houses and over the fields, but without success; we asked the people about if they had seen him, but not one of them had. At last I led the way, urged by a strange curiosity, and a kind of hope that was not hope either, up the banks of the small stream, to the little mysterious hollow. As we rounded the end of the rock that shut it in, my eyes lighted upon a heap of clothes in one part of the place, among which his red jacket was plain, and over it his belt and bayonet, laid along with his cap and watch.

“I’m blessed if he has not gone in to bathe and been drowned!” cried one of us, by name Joe Morgan, a Welshman.

I thought so myself for a moment or two, and was going up to the clothes, when I observed, about a couple of yards distant from them, a heap of bones, quite fresh-looking, white and red, like bones laid aside in a butcher’s stall; and—Lord be with us!—right in the midst of them was a human skull, with the eyes and all the flesh pared clean away.

I could now well conceive it was all up with poor Nick. But what next? About two yards from the bones was a third heap, of bits of flesh, chopped nearly as small as minced-meat. Two eyes and ears were laid on the top of the heap, and on the pieces of skin I could see the tattooed triangles and serpents, and suns and moons, and other figures which I had remarked when my poor comrade and I bathed the day before. Oh, it was dreadful! Upon my word I felt in a mortal funk as I looked at the remains of the poor fellow, and so did we all, though it was broad daylight, and we had our arms.

There was an unhallowed neatness about the whole arrangement, that showed a strange coolness and deliberation in the perpetration of the deed; nothing was scattered about, but all the remains were packed carefully in one or other of the three heaps. The grass was not trodden down more than we had done with our own feet, or he and I on the day before when bathing. There was no blood to be seen about among the grass, on the stones, or on the face of the rock; in short, I could see no difference in the place from what it was when I had seen it before, except the presence of the three ghastly heaps.

I took up his bayonet and drew it. It was quite clear and bright, and had plainly not been used by him in his defence, or, if it had, it had been cleaned and polished since. The clothes were carefully folded, but we remarked they were not folded the right way—that is, with the sleeves of the jacket, for instance, done first, and then the body over them; but sleeves, body, and back were folded at once in squares, as one would do who had not been in the habit of using such clothing.

You may guess we were all pretty much struck. I could not imagine what to do for some time, I was so overcome; and I fervently thanked Providence in my own mind that I had not been allowed to go with him that evening in search of his devil-guarded treasure.

At length, leaving two on guard over the remains, we went down to the little hamlet near the bridge, where we had a rude coffin constructed in a few hours, by Hindoo workmen. Into this we put them and carried them to our quarters. Next morning he received a soldier's funeral.

Now you would expect there would be a precious row kicked up about such an affair as this—and so there was, but nothing came of it; only it was easy to

see that the people in the neighbourhood, who were all poor ignorant country-folks, knew nothing about it. It was never explained, and after a time it ceased to be talked about in the regiment, for poor Nick was too clever to be liked by more than one or two, and few, consequently, missed him.

By the time the old soldier had finished his story, we had entered the town. I commended the narrative very highly, expressed my wonder and interest, and then remarked that, after so long a walk and so long a talk, his mouth must be dry, and that I would feel pleasure in drinking with him another pint of beer.

“I would rather not, if you please, sir,” said he, “but take the money home to my old woman—poor soul! she has got the rheumatiz, and the coals were nearly out this morning—that is, if it’s quite the same to you, sir.”

“Oh, perfectly. Come here, Nanny, my dear; take that home to your mother. Nay, my good fellow, don’t say anything, for I’m sure, if I could tell your story as well as you have told it me, it would bring me as many guineas as there are shillings there. And

now, Nanny, give me a kiss, be a good girl, and kind to the 'old woman,' and don't forget your reading. Good bye !”

“ Good bye, sir, and the poor man's blessing go with you !”

CHAPTER XV.

MARIANNE ESTERLING.

THE first scene of our story is laid in a chamber in a large old house in the quietest street of an ancient, populous, and wealthy city. This street has a singularly retired, even deserted look. The pavement is unmarked by footsteps, and looks clean and bleached—unsoiled since the last rain. About the kerbstones spring up tufts of long grass of a vivid green, which also rise abundantly from between the white rounded blocks of the causeway. One end opens through an iron railing, by a wide gate, usually kept unlocked, upon the large public park, whilst the other is shut out by a similar fence and gate, with a porter's lodge attached, from a crowded and busy thoroughfare, one of the chief streets of the city.

The houses are all large, heavy, sombre, old-fashioned edifices, with gardens in the rear. They were formerly inhabited by the chief merchants and professional men, but these have migrated now to quite the other end of the town. Their tenants have become the two and three hundred a-year people—retired tradesmen, merchants who have failed and live on the wreck of their fortunes, ministers of limited dissenting congregations, and the like, and many professional lodging-house-keepers, who make a comfortable business, as the peaceful, secluded aspect of the place, with the fresh breezes from the park and the country beyond, as well as its immediate vicinity to the principal marts of traffic, render it a desirable residence for the numerous unsettled individuals who abound in a mercantile community.

The principal chamber in one of these houses—that nearest the park—is our immediate scene. It is a large and lofty-ceiled apartment, with heavy cornices and elaborate ornamental plaster-work. The wall on one whole side is taken up by book-shelves, from as high as the arm can reach down to the floor, crowded with volumes, nearly all of them in richly-gilded bindings of deep green, dark red, or purple leather. A second

side is hung with pictures—one, a plate of Lawrence's portrait of John Kemble in the character of *Hamlet*; another, of Mrs. Siddons as *Lady Macbeth*; the third, a full-length portrait of Lord Byron. Beneath, there runs a line of small drawings of scenery, minutely and very beautifully executed in colours. The opposite wall presents a large fire-place, of massive black marble. A heavily-cut fender protects the rug, but in place of grate you observe a curious arrangement of bricks, and plates and bars of iron: this is a small chemical furnace, constructed under the direction of the tenant of the place. On the mantel-shelf stand a number of specimens of minerals, a small brass model of a marine steam-engine, and a globular crystal cover, containing some rare and beautiful preserved birds—tiny things, of lustrous and many-tinted plumage—the treasures of the African and American woods. The carpet, which has a yielding feel to the feet, as if there were another beneath it, is littered with books of an equal richness of exterior with those on the shelves, along with newspapers, numbers of works in course of publication, and of scientific and literary periodicals, among which the vivid colours of dear old blue-and-yellow are conspicuous. Large sheets of paper, pro-

bably maps or plans, lie here and there among them, rolled up and bound with silken tape. A pair of globes stand hard by, and in a corner a large cylindrical electric machine. One or two busts are placed about the room, and on a small table between the two windows stands a beautiful bronze figure of Niobe and her child, with a silver-keyed flute of ebony beside it, and a champagne-glass, containing in water a few pretty little early wild flowers, the produce of last evening's botanizing ramble.

There are two tables—one close to a window; on it are some drawing materials of the costliest description, and a large portfolio of brown morocco, profusely gilded, and ornamented with pieces of leather of the brightest colours, inlaid into the dark boards. Another table is drawn close to the sparkling fire. It bears a number of books huddled together, to support in a sloping position two large folios, open. One is a huge, ancient, mustily-smelling volume, with thick dark boards and bright red edges—a Leyden edition of Plato, nearly two centuries old, and evidently from the library of the university; the other, gilt-edged and morocco-bound, is a Greek lexicon. Two smaller volumes are Xenophon's "*Memorabilia Nephelæ*."

Close to these is placed a writing-stand of some rare purple wood inlaid with gold, and in a watch-stand of similar materials beside it lies a valuable repeater, with a thick heavy black ribbon attached. Various scientific utensils meet the eye everywhere around. Here lies an electric discharger, with a handle of agate; there a number of retorts and Berlin basins and tubes; yonder you see a microscope, and near it a delicate pair of scales under a glass case. A superb library-chair of dark mahogany, with a deep-red leather covering, cushioned, and contrived, by metallic springs and pivots, to meet and yield to every motion of the frame, stands between the table and fire-place, and in it is seated the inhabitant of this curiously-furnished apartment.

He is a young man, about nineteen years of age, very slight, and wearing a peculiarity of aspect, like that produced by dissipation, but in him arising from causes very widely different. His features are not at all regular, would rather appear positively harsh and disagreeable, were it not for the dreamy expression of vivid but fitful fancy, of careless intelligence, aimless talent, that animates them. Indeed, they do appear forbidding to a mere commonplace observer, and the

knowledge of this was one of the great causes that induced upon Mr. Basil May, the individual in question, his remarkable points of character. His slippered feet rest on a footstool by the fender ; a waistcoat and trousers of plain black cloth form his attire ; and his coat—for he has got into a habit of throwing it off to study—is laid upon a sofa ; while a fine young cat, of a light grey colour, striped with black like a small tiger, and wearing a leather collar, gilded uniformly with the binding of the volumes that meet the eye everywhere around, nestles in its folds, purring away in drowsy satisfaction.

The heavy curtains are pinned back altogether from the windows, to allow free ingress to every ray of light, for the sight of the occupant has been somewhat dulled by years of constant study—constant, because pursued for no other result than the mere delight it yields. He sits motionless for a while, and then a curious yet pleasing smile flits over his wan, absent-looking face. He has this morning been occupied with contemplating the character of Socrates, as portrayed by Plato and Xenophon, his disciples, and the vivid contrast as hit off by the caustic pencil of the great comic poet and satirist. He was led to this investigation

yesterday, having commenced translating into English verse one of those beautiful lyric effusions, with which, as choruses, Aristophanes delights to vary the fun and ribaldry of his scenes. He is at a loss which to give implicit credence to, and has just come to the conclusion that the comic author could hardly have ventured to present the philosopher in such colours in an Athenian theatre, if he had not *some* foundation, and that, too, with which most of his audience were acquainted. The thought that even Homer sometimes sleeps, and even Socrates sometimes plays the fool, occasioned the smile upon his face.

Whilst he is thus entertained, we shall take the opportunity to lay open a little of his history. His father was a dissenting clergyman in one of the great manufacturing towns in the north of England. From the fact of many wealthy traders being among his flock, as well as from a small fortune he had acquired with his wife, he was enabled to live in comfort and elegance, and even to cultivate the expensive tastes of educated leisure. His wife was taken from him within a year or two after the birth of an only son, and to him, who was always of delicate health, he devoted the whole of his affection, making his instruction the

complete occupation of those hours not immediately demanded by his duties as a pastor.

As the boy grew up, he gave continual evidence of a most sensitive temperament—a singularly strong respect and love for his father, to whom he seemed more of a companion and friend than of a child—a vivid sense of honour—an aptitude to form attachments to peculiar places—an admiration of poetry and music—a love of flowers—and a tendency to make pets of all sorts of objects—singing-birds, cats, dogs, mice, even of particular volumes. He was of precocious talent—at least, from the conversation of his father, and from the books of which he was continually occupied in the perusal, he was so far in advance of boys of his own age that he could find no pleasure in associating with them. No more did he like the conversation of grown-up men, the mere gentlemen of ordinary life; for all his ideas were so different from theirs, and his book-knowledge so much fresher—moreover, the sneaking dislike which an ignorant man advanced in life feels and shows to a well-informed child was so disagreeable to him—that when not with his father he chose solitary reading and solitary rambling in preference to any society. He was never put to school. His father

taught him everything he did not acquire of himself, for he loved the boy so much as to be unable to live without his company, and trembled at the demoralization, the hardening, the prostration of all the affections, which are the effect of a large public school on the youthful mind.

The result of all this may be inferred. Basil grew up a delicate, reserved, eccentric youth, who did not by any graces of person compensate for the awkwardness of his manners ; avoided by society as much as he avoided it, ridiculed by the foolish, and all but pitied by the merely compassionate.

When he had reached his sixteenth year, his father fell sick and died, leaving him a permanent income of 500*l.* a-year, along with a large sum in money uninvested. Although he was a minor, the testator had perfect confidence, as much in his sense to prevent his being duped by others, as in his morality and religion to prevent his duping himself, and took measures to ensure to him the unrestricted command of this property.

The death of his father was an event that made a deep and vivid impression upon him. He mourned not more the bereavement of an affectionate, devoted, and dearly-beloved parent, than the loss of a talented,

a constant, and confidential friend, and the effect told woefully upon his health. The fact, however, of his being able to shift for himself brought him more in contact with the world than hitherto, although still retirement was his choice. But as all his ideas of employment or pleasure were connected with the acquirement of knowledge, he found the only solace he knew of in study, and in the companionship of his books; giving the time spared from them to wandering from place to place alone, swiftly or lingeringly, as his whim suggested, viewing spots which derived their charm to him from literary or historical associations, such as the birthplace of Shakspeare, Stonehenge, Runnymede, Newstead Abbey, or the like.

When about seventeen, he bethought him of entering some university, not with any view to academical honours, or even to the acquirement of a profession, for he had no ambition of any kind, and his income was abundantly sufficient at once to cover all his wants, and to leave ample overplus for charity, which he practised in ways as quiet and unobtrusive, as original and eccentric, as all his other habits and pursuits. Moreover, he saw it was of such a nature as to be permanently adequate to all his limited desires.

He never thought of study as a labour, or the way to knowledge as an up-hill path ; and anything that seemed to threaten such a change in idea he would avoid as likely to convert into a pain the greatest and only perfect delight he was cognizant of. The idea of a mental effort, of tasking the intellect, of compelling the thoughts to any subject that did not yield them present pleasure, was abhorrent to him. Every pursuit that can delight the mind he followed without rule or method, or caring whether in it he was thoroughly successful, or moderately, or only a little. The moment it ceased to gratify, he dismissed it. Painting, poetry, music, sculpture, languages, philosophy, sciences, the drama, history, to each did he more or less devote himself, according to the pleasure it yielded. He was, to sum up his character, an intellectual epicure.

But on thinking over such a proceeding as studying at a university, he reflected that, according to the law of England, a few peculiarities in his mode of practising the worship of our common religion prevented him from learning logic, mathematics, and the like, at the public educational institutions of his country—that, in consequence, the only resource left him was to go over the borders to where, on a less enlightened principle,

they consider learning a marketable commodity, and let any one have it who is willing to pay for it, and where, as a result to be expected from free competition in the article, it is to be had both at the cheapest rate and of the best quality.

Warmly congratulating himself on this lucky alternative, Basil bade adieu to his happy and mind-illuminated native land, and, betaking himself to the benighted North, entered his name as a student at one of those tag-rag and bob-tail institutions, the Scotch universities;—nay, after a time, he was not ashamed even to give a small sum for that ridiculous distinction, a Scotch degree—a thing for which all southern scholars show a becoming contempt by tacking to their B. A., A. M., or M. D., the distinguished and sounding syllables “OXON,” or “CANTAB” as much to evince the superior profundity of their acquirements, and to intimate to the admiring public that they were lawfully qualified to imbibe the same by conscientiously breaking their eggs at the big end, and by other observances equally important and meritorious, as to let it be known that they rank a little higher than the mere Adam Smiths, and Watts, and Hunters, and Broughams, of the North, with their simple sneaking

“ LL.D.’s.” They would flatter themselves they are a step or two above that !

It may be stated that in Scotland students do not reside within the university they attend, but are at liberty to find their dinners, their rooms, or their society, when they can, how they can, and where they can, as a soldier says his prayers ; food for the mind being all the nourishment the college bargains to supply. In consequence, Basil, in his wanderings about the city, having been struck with the breezy, sequestered quiet of the street alluded to, resolved to establish himself here, and, having had his favourite books transmitted from England, conveyed them to the house of a widow, by name Mrs. Esterling, from whom he had hired apartments.

Here he went on as before, giving all his hours to study and the pursuits of taste. The classes he attended as his fancy suggested, sometimes far overstretching the tasks there prescribed, sometimes neglecting them altogether, as a more pleasurable mental occupation, haply, presented itself. His abundant income he laid out on his best friends, his books, and on costly furniture and *matériel* for study, or the exercise of taste. But even these, profuse as was his expendi-

ture upon them, left a considerable surplus, which found its way from his pocket here, at the university, in a manner analogous to what had been usual about his home. Many a poor but talented student struggling to rise in life by the steep and thorny path of intellectual acquirement (and it is a comforting thing to think there is a country where learning's road from poverty to independence and distinction, however difficult and exhausting it be of itself, as God knows it is, still it is not blocked by any fence-work of man's construction!)—many a one in these circumstances, whose heart yearned for an additional class, for which his time was ample, but his funds, miserably as he stinted them, inadequate, would be surprised some day to receive, in a blank envelope, authenticated papers constituting him a member of that class, nor in his joyous confusion could for a moment imagine they came from that cold, distant, bashful English lad, who sat always alone, and seemed so uninterested in anything.

He courted no society among the students, was always civil and kind when spoken to, but appeared to shun any companionship. He strove for no premiums, sought no distinction, nor did he appear to feel either admiration or envy for those leading spirits whose rival

displays of talent drew forth daily encomiums from the teachers, and bursts of noisy applause from their assembled fellow-pupils. All these, as well as the factions, the cliques, and intrigues, political, academical, and of other descriptions, that surrounded him, he viewed with a calm, absent indifference.

At college he remained during the winter session. In the spring, when most of the students return to their homes, to prepare themselves by solitary study for the labours of the more advanced classes of next winter, he still continued in the same quarters, his residence being varied by a month's midsummer tour in the mountainous parts of the country. Why he did not return to England, the country he had left but a few months before, and that with so many pangs of sorrow, and why he had resolved to make for some years this new residence his home, will be accounted for presently.

Let us now return to him as we left him, in the midst of his books, at his solitary studies. Suddenly the sound of distant military music arrests him; he hears it with attention and surprise, never before having known the quiet of that unfrequented street so broken. It becomes louder and richer, and appears

to be the notes of a fine martial air from the instruments of a numerous and well-appointed band. He pauses to listen. A moment, and a new sound comes upon his ear, and a faint flush crosses his pale features, and a glow of delight lightens up his eye. That sound has more music to his heart than the softest cadences or proudest bursts of melody the band could accomplish. It is the fall of a light, quick footstep in the passage, and a low, eager knock at the door of his study. Giving a half-regretful look at Plato and his hard-named companions on the table, he rises, draws on his coat, and opens the door, when in bounds a most graceful girl, her pretty face all animation.

“My good Mr. May,” she exclaims, “do let me look out at your window ; here are the soldiers coming down our street to the park, to review—how they got through the gates I don’t know, but here they are. Oh, how sweet is that music ! it makes one feel quite brave and daring !”

Before she had time to say this she had drawn down one of the curtains, and stands half behind it, looking out upon the glittering display that is approaching. May takes his place beside her, a little back from the glass, regarding the spectacle with the same look that

is habitual to him, of caring for none of these things ; all that interests him, besides the beautiful girl near him, being the music, which, however, he could hear as well in his chair.

“ How fine and manly they look ! how happy they must be all in their bright red clothes and glancing accoutrements ! ”

“ Yes, Miss Esterling, and the drum-major must be the happiest ; he is the finest-looking and gaudiest, you see. ”

“ Ah, you always talk so against everything that is not in books. ”

A long pause.

“ But does not the band sound sweetly now, far away down among the trees ? ”

“ Yes, it is indeed beautiful, very beautiful ! ”

“ Hark ! how touching and sad ! I could almost cry now. ”

“ Pooh, nonsense, Miss Esterling ! ”

A lively smile drives the pensive expression from her face, like a light cloud-shadow from a summer field, as, turning from the window, she looks around her.

“ Well, Mr. May, you are a strange creature. You

have no taste. How careless you are! how you do toss all your pretty books about, and yet are so fond of them! Why don't you put them away, and all these other things, properly and carefully?"

"The reason is simply this: the pleasure I could feel in putting them all in order is great, but is not equal to that which in the same space of time I could derive from reading, drawing, or other pursuits. So whenever my table gets cumbered I put the books out of the way, anywhere that is readiest at the time. Besides, I think, as there is no one to trample over them, they repose as well and look as well on the chairs or carpet as they would in the cases."

"Oh, you know I can't argue with you. It is no longer ago than yesterday I sent Mima into the room when you were out, to put your things to rights, and she made everything quite tidy."

"And only spoilt a process of chemical analysis, lost the marks out of half my books, and tumbled all my papers together. Ah, I see how it is; you are all in a conspiracy against me. But I'll pay you off. I'll get that machine there into action, and arrange the wires so that the moment the girl puts her foot inside the door, off she goes into fits."

“ For pity’s sake, Mr. May, don’t dream of such a thing ; poor Jemima is already persuaded that you are ‘ no canny.’ But tell me all about this great book. What are these strange cramped figures—Hebrew ?”

“ No, this is Greek—this is Plato—you have heard the name ?”

“ Oh, yes—Platonic—love. Is that what it is about ?”

“ Yes, there is all about it over here, in a treatise which he calls ‘ The Symposium, or Banquet.’ ”

“ Well, shut up your books now. I want you to come and walk with me down in the park to look at the review.”

“ But what has that to do with Platonic love ?”

“ Nothing ; but Mr. Houldsworth, the other lodger, wanted to drive me round in his gig.”

Basil’s eyes dropped to the ground as she mentioned the name, and his pale features grew darkly paler. After a moment, “ Well, Miss Esterling,” said he, “ I think riding is the best plan, and I will stay at home and finish the group of flowers for you before the originals become faded.”

“ Oh, I can finish the picture myself at any time.

But you will come with me now? It is to be a very grand review—such a display, Mr. Houldsworth says!”

He remained without a word, looking to the floor, as if in a trance. After a pause, during which her lovely blue eyes were bent upon him with an expression of archness, kindness, and a little anxiety, she laid her small, fair hand lightly on his arm, as if to call back his attention, and continued,—

“You are looking very pale and unwell to-day; come and have a ramble over the park with me; these books will ruin your health. It is a beautifully warm day, and the sun shines so brightly; we’ll have a walk over the fresh grass by the river. I do love to walk with you, Mr. May; you know so much, and can tell me about so many things. You will be quite in spirits; everything is so sunny and gay.”

With a slight involuntary sigh, recalling his thoughts, he answers in acquiescence. “I shan’t detain you five minutes,” she says, as she hurries away to dress. Basil, too, calls his footboy, and retires to draw on his shoes and gaiters, and get his hat, gloves, and cane.

When he enters the room again he sees her shawled, bonneted, and gloved, standing turning over the leaves of that old mystic volume, as lovely a creature as ever

by the light of her presence cheered the loneliness of a student's chamber.

A joyous day that must have been to these two youthful beings, each loving the other with a jealous though unavowed fondness—both lonely—little mingling with the world—with minds delicately sensible—emotions that thrilled even to a passing thought. Joyous it must have been indeed, as they wandered together at the bright noon of a day in spring through the glades of that extensive park, without one near to mar their enjoyment of their own earnestly sought society. Every tree appeared fresh, green, and young, like themselves; the river by which they chose their path was clear as crystal, and the fish seemed to leap from its bosom for very joy; the grass and wild daisies shed a faint perfume that was caught up by the light airs from the west, and wafted to their senses along with the distant hum of business from the crowded city, or the softened music of the soldiers, whose moving files, lessened by distance, could be seen bright and glancing far away beneath the trees.

At the time when this occurred, Basil had been about a year and a half resident with Mrs. Esterling. Marianne and he were now on terms of playful in-

timacy. At this state they had arrived by gradual progression, their approaches toward it being at first vague and scarcely perceptible, but their coldness and distance diminishing, and their familiarity increasing, "according to the square of the time," as he mathematically expressed it.

For the first month or so his heart was so oppressed with the death of his father, and absence from all those scenes that had been dear to him, that he was little disposed to give more than an uninterested glance at the graceful and lively girl he saw moving about the house and garden, and who often met him in his walks about the park. After a time he began to regard her, but as a beautiful object of taste, and was wont to sketch her off with his pencil when the whim seized him, as he would a pretty flower or a picturesque scene. By-and-bye, as he saw traits of her lively and affectionate disposition, his feelings with regard to her began to lose the qualities of mere cold admiration, though still he could have left the house and her without a regret, nor did one thought of her interrupt his studies, unless when her form met his eye, or the music of her voice reached his ear.

For her mother he had always great esteem. She

was a quiet, staid, elderly woman, yet her activity, and a something in the lines of her countenance, seemed to plead that sorrow more than time had contributed to induce upon her the marks of age. A strict justice and liberality in all her dealings with him, together with unvarying and unobtrusive kindness, were the first things that drew his regard, while his interest was excited by the subdued, patient, unsmiling peculiarities of her demeanour. To the casual observer she seemed like one afflicted with some slow, continually painful ailment, and bearing it with resignation, seeking for neither sympathy nor relief: another might have judged that something lay heavy on her mind, or that she suffered from melancholy as a disease. His impression was that this took its rise from excited religious notions; an opinion, however, which more intimate acquaintance led him to think incompatible with the calm, unaffected piety, the mildness, the strict morality, the charity, in every sense of that word of many meanings, which she constantly displayed. Moreover, she had from the first had a perfect view of his character, and humoured his eccentricities, and watched over his welfare with a sort of maternal solicitude that was more than gratifying to

him. She was of the same persuasion in religion as himself; and a frequent visitor at the house, in discharge of devotional duties, was the pastor of the parish, a gentleman who had been well known to his father, and had once stayed with him for some weeks, and assisted to perform divine service at his chapel.

The Rev. Dr. — then was the only individual in the city with whom Basil had any acquaintance. With him he sometimes passed an evening, and in this way was introduced to his sister, who kept house for him, a good-looking, intelligent lady, in conversation with whom he took some pleasure. She possessed the art (a somewhat difficult one) of setting the student entirely at his ease, when the accumulated treasures of his wayward mind gushed forth in a flow of natural eloquence that amply rewarded her tact.

One morning, when he had concluded a religious visit (occasions on which Basil considered it a duty to be always present, along with his landlady and her daughter), on taking his leave he invited the young people to come to tea with him that evening. He was not aware that up to that time these young people, whom he regarded as little more than children, had scarcely exchanged a word. As for dreaming of any

likelihood of affection between them, it certainly never gave him a moment's thought, his ideas generally running on very different things. He merely desired to let his sister become acquainted with a youthful member of his congregation so pretty and good as Miss Esterling, and thought Basil a suitable companion to her by the way.

It was with a great effort of moral courage indeed that the latter undertook the office ; and though, when he felt the light arm of the shy but gleeful girl passed through his, and touching his side, a feeling of novelty and pleasure mingled with his embarrassment, yet as they walked along he was altogether at a loss how or on what topics to address her. Of the nonsense—the spoken silliness, garnished with smiles, and interspersed with little flatteries, wherewith fine gentlemen entertain the fair sex (often to the great delight of the latter, at least in appearance), and which approaches nearer to the language mutually understood by babies and nursery-maids than to any other discourse we wot of—he was as ignorant as he despised it, and those accomplished in its idioms. Consequently, for the greater part of their walk scarcely a word was interchanged between them. At length, happening to pass a print-

seller's window, a large plate of one of Martin's paintings arrested their movements. In a moment he was fixed, and stood absorbed, till, recollecting himself, and turning his head, he saw her gazing at the picture, with her finger on her underlip, and her eyes beaming a delighted wonder. His tongue was loosened, and, drawing her attention to different points of the subject, he descanted enthusiastically on their merits. In a low murmuring voice, whilst yet her eyes were fixed upon it, she replied in acquiescence, expressing her admiration of the multitudinous crowds, the stupendous buildings heaped pile upon pile, and stretching, through most correct perspective, far into the distance, the graceful and striking figures in the foreground, and the strange air of grandeur, antiquity, and mystery, that pervaded the whole composition.

As they walked on, this formed the topic of an animated discourse, and he was gratified to find her possessed of a very fine natural taste, along with an earnest and sensible way of expressing the just opinions she appeared to form. In the course of that evening the conversation at the clergyman's table chanced to turn upon literary subjects, especially the Waverley novels. As it ran on, Basil was led to remark very

strongly on what he called the incorrect and most ungenerous picture presented by their author, of the founders of his country's religion—representing them as bloodthirsty ruffians, canting, ambitious knaves, raving fanatics, and empty-headed coxcombs; and depicting their inveterate persecutor, one of the most cold-blooded and unprincipled partisans that ever was cast up by the ferment of a civil war, as a mirror of honour and refinement—holding up a man whose memory had never hitherto been alluded to by his countrymen but with execration, as a very paragon of chivalry.

“Would it not have been right,” continued he, “considering the thing but in the light of a matter of taste, for a man who had (with what motives I presume not to judge) abjured the principles taught him by honest and worthy parents, to have at least maintained a decent silence with regard to them, and not, renegade-like, turned round, and with the weapon of anonymous fiction misrepresented and mocked his father's faith, and those whose blood, shed like water, made it the established religion of his native land?”

The reader will here observe that we are stating at present our hero's opinions, and not our own—the

better to prevent any misconception with regard to which, we shall detail no further the bitter tirade he indulged in, getting more earnest and excited as he proceeded.

It would have been amusing to watch Marianne's face as he spoke. Now she hung on his words with a look of admiration and delight, as if she listened to some superior being—then, with an expression of sorrow, of envy, almost of hatred, did she regard the clergyman's worthy sister, to whom all his conversation was directed, and to whom he seemed to pay so much respect and regard. At last even a tear stole gently into her eye, but it was unperceived by any but herself. She learned then that a fine person, fine clothing, and a ready address were not all the charms a man might possess to be loved withal, and wondered that a youth who had erewhile seemed so awkward and uninviting should so suddenly change into one so gifted and loveable.

As they returned home that evening, they found the gate into their street obstructed by a crowd, and that consequently they would require to go round by the park. They went; and if they did prolong their walk down one of the moonlit glades, the night was certainly

very beautiful, and the air was so fresh and pure after the closeness of the town.

After that they met each other frequently in the garden and about the house, and books began to be borrowed and lent. Oh, what admirable make-believes are book-borrowing visits among the young! Then there was the procuring of flower-seeds, and planting them in the garden—the daily joyous visit to watch the young blades of green shooting above the soil. Besides, were there not shopping excursions, walks in the park, and frequent sketching expeditions?

All this ended in vehement, o’ermastering love. Each of their hearts was well prepared by virtuous education—by loneliness—by previous absence of all ardent emotions, to become completely possessed with that powerful spirit, the passion which “never loves but one,” and each willingly yielded to its rapturous invasion. Loving came to be the sole business of their thoughts—pleasing each other the one motive of their actions. Their joy was to be near each other—their pain, to be away—their hope, that they would never part—their fear, that the affection of the loved one might grow less. Love such as this is happiness. We may be pleased with fame, proud of rank, gratified

with friendship, overjoyed in the acquisition of wealth, elated by the possession of power, but we are never blessed till we know we are beloved. So well and universally recognised is this truth, that all tribes who believe in a future state of reward make their heaven a region of love.

But our felicity is decreed to be brief, and dashed with trouble. The rose must have its thorn, and the thorns of love's blossom are many. But that which wounded poor Basil's heart with the most cankering sting, was jealousy. He could not hear her mention a name but a pang shot through him, or allude to any quality he did not possess, without feeling his heart sink.

Mr. Houldsworth, who occupied the remaining apartments besides his own, was a stylish young fellow, the junior partner of a rising firm of cotton-brokers in Liverpool, and their traveller and general agent. He considered it but a piece of pastime to make love to his landlady's daughter, who, he deemed, should have felt herself honoured by such attention. But while she took care to avoid all intimacy with him beyond what the fact of their living under the same roof required, yet even that was wormwood to the student.

He felt in misery to hear words of cheerful greeting pass between them in the hall, or to see him come out to her to the garden to ask a flower for his button-hole, and obtain it from her hands, after a long choosing for a pretty one : and when he beheld the showy young man, bewhiskered and curled, dressed after the latest fashion, and glittering with jewellery, jump into his dashing gig, and make the quick steps of his blood mare rattle through the echoing street, he could not help exclaiming,—

“ Can such things be—that a woman in her senses can be influenced by attractions which any fool can provide himself with for a few sovereigns in the next street ? Can Marianne be such a woman ? ”

It is possible she might have felt a capricious pleasure in making him believe she was pleased with this person ; for what delight is equal to the perception that one we love much is jealous of our affections wandering away ? Besides, it was useful to have something wherewithal to keep up the balance of independence, when Basil, sorely to her mortification, would persist in visiting at Dr. ——’s, and in extolling the good qualities of his sister. Alas ! many a solitary salt tear did these praises cost her, for she knew he

was not feigning when he expressed such opinions, and that the esteem he felt for the lady was sincere.

Many were the little coolnesses that from such causes as these arose between them, which, however, were always in a few days forgotten. Oh, the rapture of a reconciliation with one we dearly love when we are young, from whom we have been estranged but by a little unfounded jealousy! But all these annoyances faded into nothing before a master-passion that now usurped his mind—a new jealousy, that by its certainty and overwhelming nature made his former doubts and surmises disappear, and caused him with bitterness to wish that once more he had nothing but them to disquiet him.

When he became first on terms of intimacy with her he remarked several calls at the house by a gentleman, whom he knew to be one of the leading manufacturers of his native town, and to be also at the head of a flourishing trading house in the city of his present sojourn. His name was Warkworth; he was a married man, but childless. He was of questionable character—indeed, bore the fame of a libertine. The first time Basil saw this individual about the house, which was when he had been about a year lodging

there, and was beginning to take notice of those who came to it, he concluded he must be mistaken in the person. A few months, and he observed him again. He now thought he might have called upon Mr. Houldsworth on some commercial business. But when more than two years had passed, and his passion was now in its full tide—when he began to be frequently about that quarter of the house where his landlady immediately dwelt—he made the alarming discovery that this stranger's visits were altogether to the latter and her daughter. Moreover, he observed that there was on all sides a desire to conceal these visits, especially from him, and that when the parties were surprised together there was an ominous confusion observable on every countenance: Warkworth looked like one that suffers a petty annoyance; Mrs. Esterling was pale as death, and appeared to feel an exacerbation of her malady; Marianne blushed scarlet, and remained without a word.

There was a mystery about all this that, deeply interested as he was in the welfare of the fair girl, put his mind completely on the rack, and filled it with conflicting doubts, surmises, fears, and hopes. He found a difficulty now in study, and would sit for hours look-

ing away from his open books, lost in reverie. For the first time, he felt it necessary to exert a mental effort to fix his attention to them, not for the pleasure they yielded as heretofore, but as a relief from painful thoughts.

But at length this wore off. Love, which cannot think aught ill of its object, threw a roseate veil over the whole circumstances, and he was fain to believe that all his suspicions were but the foolish offspring of his own over-anxious affection—nay, he was shortly convinced of it, and that the dear girl was altogether pure, true, and his own.

Subsequently they became, if possible, still more devoted to each other. Many of her evenings she passed in his study; she would bring her work with her, and sit quietly by him like a sister, plying her needle, or reading by the bright light of his Argand lamp, and ever and anon raising her eyes to bend a fond, admiring look on the happy student, as, absorbed, he pored upon his books. Or here they held long, quiet conversations for hours, or she would sing to him, or listen to his flute.

Everything of interest that happened to him about the university or elsewhere—every new opinion he

heard, or was led to form, with regard to anything he could comprehend—every feeling of his mind, each joy and sorrow, each hope and intention, he unfolded to her. His history, and recollections of his childhood, and of his father, and his home, he freely imparted to her.

A similar confidence he met with from her, save upon one point—her connexion with Warkworth. To this she never once alluded ; she also spoke with delicacy and reserve about her own descent. Her father had been a manufacturer in the city, but was not a strictly good man ; he had separated from her mother, and afterwards left her, with but their house and furniture whereby to earn a living.

But in the midst of all this an occurrence took place which brought affairs between them to a crisis. Basil had gone to be present at a sale of the books, pictures, &c., of an eccentric single gentleman, lately deceased. The house was about a dozen miles from the city, and he would require to be for the whole day away from home. As he went, however, to hire a carriage to convey him to the sale, he discovered, from the posted advertisements, that he was a week too early, having mistaken one Monday for another. This was nothing remark-

able to one of his absent, inattentive habits, and, turning, he went slowly back toward his lodgings. He lingered by the way, however, at libraries and booksellers' shops for several hours.

As he drew near home, and was sauntering leisurely along in the sunny warmth of the day, his eyes were attracted by the singular elegance of figure of a young lady who walked a few paces in advance of him, hanging on the arm of a tall, manly-looking, middle-aged gentleman. As he looked, the train of thought that had previously occupied him faded away, and a new conception gradually took form in his mind. He was certain that graceful form was a familiar ideal of his thoughts. And then that stray lock of flaxen hair peeping out from under the bonnet! It must be—his heart beat quick—the blood leaped to his head—a thousand dread doubts overwhelmed him at once. Trembling with excitement, he hurried up, passed them, and, turning, beheld his love smiling on the detested Warkworth.

The moment she saw him she stood still, and clung with both hands to the arm of her companion. Her eyes seemed fixed in her head, and a deadly pallor overspread her countenance. The next instant, a deep

blush supplanted it, and she almost convulsively drew down her veil, to hide the gush of tears that fell sparkling upon her dress. Warkworth looked in wonder round him to find out the cause of her agitation, and, seeing May, he too exhibited some confusion, and hastily drew her from the path, and hurried into a side street.

It would require one having more knowledge of the human mind than we possess, to describe the feelings that wrought in poor Basil's bosom as he wandered away through the busy streets. His whole fabric of love, hope, and happiness was thunder-stricken and scattered around him, an utter wreck ; a tumultuous whirl of lacerating thoughts flew through his heart, each, as it passed, inflicting a new and deeper pang ; and he could have cursed the numerous passengers among whom he staggered on his way, for that they seemed all so light-hearted and unconcerned. The very beggar who beset his path appeared to him a happy and enviable being.

At length he reached the house, rushed into his study, locked the door, and, falling on a sofa, gave himself up to the full tide of his misery.

In an hour or two he heard the outer door open with a pass-key, and a quick, light footfall hasten across

the hall ; he thought, too, he heard a faint sob, but it might have been fancy. He remained alone in this way till the evening, when he rose, took his hat, and went out, to wander alone in the park. He had now become more calm, and could reflect upon the matter. He was convinced that he had been duped—miserably made a tool of—by an unprincipled creature with art beyond her years. Oh, is there any thought more galling than that we have been deceived by one in whom we have put our dearest confidence—that our own warm feelings have been made the means to effect the deceit? It is like a dagger-stab ; and the belief that always follows, that our betrayer feels contempt for us, is the poison thrown into the wound.

But his jealousy of her was as nothing to the intense detestation in which he held her favourite—this latter was the ruling passion. To whom is it you bear the most virulent hatred? Is it not to him who is loved by her you love—the man who basks in the smiles you would give your very soul to buy, but cannot? You envy him, and yet you hate him—you see no merit in him—he appears to you everything that is despicable, and yet how gladly would you change conditions with him ! Anon, let the valued fair one leave him for another,

as she left you for him, and your hatred ceases—he is now a fellow-sufferer—your ill-will becomes pity, sympathy, fellow-feeling ; and you could all but swear with him a perpetual friendship.

It was with such feelings as these that Basil now called to mind the antipathy he had formerly entertained to Houldsworth, the very sight of whom he used to shun as an annoyance. How differently now did he think of him !

“ Poor young fellow ! he too, with his gewgaws and frippery, had been taken in. We have both been fooled. I wonder what he thinks now ? for he must long have known it. But I see how it is—money is their object ; she has been fluctuating between our hundreds a-year, and now this fellow’s thousands have turned the balance : she has been keeping me as a kind of reserve to fall back upon when others have done with her. And that ancient hypocrite, the mother ! how well she abets—nay, she must be the instigator of the schemes : and Warkworth, too—what a look of love did this Delilah of seventeen bend upon him ! but he is handsome and free of his money ; yet he is a married man—they can have no designs upon him in that way ; can they in any other ? is she a thing so vile ?

Oh, agony ! What am I to do ? I must not let them know my mind. I see my course—I shall stay here for a month or so, and go about as usual, but never another thought of mine shall be given to her, nor shall a word pass between us. I shall then quietly go off to England—at least leave this place for ever.”

He sought his home with this resolution, and for some weeks he kept it, at least as far as silence went, and avoiding her in every way. But could he keep her from his thoughts ? He knew he could not—he could not even try. No ! every process of his mind involved her : she was his memory—he could only recollect scenes in which she was mingled ; she was his imagination—for alone, and every minute, with new associations did the idea of her rise in his mind ; she was his judgment—for the thought of her determined all his actions ; she was his fear, his hope, and, oh, how much his love ! She had been his joy, and was now his misery. Happy would he have been could he have ceased to think of her, but the very mental act of willing to think of her no longer, was still a thought regarding her. Thus he remained for some days, his mind a vortex of passions, plans, and resolves, which changed with every hour. He was unable to sleep for

thinking of her, and, when exhausted nature yielded, she rose in every dream.

He could not help seeing her once or twice during this period. She appeared pale and careworn, as if she too suffered acutely in her mind. When her eye met his, a feeling of shame was evident through her countenance, but he felt instinctively it was not the shame of guilt, but that of misfortune. It seemed impossible for the most prejudiced spectator to see evil in that face, on which fair-fronted innocence palpably sat, albeit in the midst of sorrows. At length a reaction began in his thoughts.

It cannot be—I was wrong to judge so harshly—besides, I took no account of motives. Again: have I not known her since from a child she changed to a woman? and did I ever know a word or act of hers that could in the remotest degree indicate such conclusions as my passions have led me to form, much less could justify them? No angel's face ever had an expression of more purity, or beamed a sweeter smile; and I have condemned her unheard! But then, how she smiled upon *him*! But she is so young—she cannot be far gone in her course of evil—she is still to be reclaimed. But again, the concealment—the du-

plicity! The whole matter is inscrutable. I must have an explanation from her; and, if I find her really what I surmised, I can be no worse than I am—my heart can be no more than broken.”

Thereupon he sent his servant to her with a note, asking if he might see her, who shortly returned with an answer in the affirmative.

He found her alone: she was seated on a sofa, with her hands folded upon her lap, and appeared to be lost in a train of thought of a mournful cast. As he entered she raised her head, and a trace of her former glad smile of welcome rose on her face; but, as her eye met his, this disappeared, and she grew pale, and her lip trembled. For a moment or two no word was spoken; at length he said,—

“Miss Esterling, we have been strangers for a long time”—She made no reply. “I am going back to England, and my opinion is that, after what has passed between us, it would be right to part in good will, if we cannot do so in friendship—to use no warmer word.”

A pause.

“You are aware of the reason of our estrangement?”

“ I am : I know well what are your thoughts of me ; but I assure you they are without foundation. You are altogether mistaken ;—but I blame no one ; it could not be otherwise.”

“ I should be overjoyed to believe this. Are you aware that Warkworth is a married man ?”

“ I believe he is”—

“ I really did not think, from what I knew of you, that I could ever detect you guilty of even deceit to me, much less that I would find you artfully setting out your charms to make a conquest (for what end I will not judge) of this husband of another woman—this man of notorious character.”

She sprang up, her face red with anger, and stamped her foot on the floor, while her eyes glared upon him with pride, indignation, and scorn ; but, seeing him continue to regard her unmoved, she fell back into her seat, and, covering her face with her fingers, gave way to a fit of hysterical weeping and sobbing. For a little he forbore to speak, then, drawing nearer to her, he said,—

“ If I have given you pain by my words, think what an agony of mind your conduct has caused me. You have often given me reason to believe you entertained

a very strong regard for me ; latterly I have been led to think this was not real. If it is, you can prove it by giving me an explanation of your connexion with this man Warkworth. I know that any third person might think I have no right to ask this ; but you, when you consider the terms on which we used to be, will, I am sure, acknowledge I have a right."

"Warkworth's calls here are altogether on business. He was intimately wrought up in my father's affairs, and still continues to be. He was a party to the unhappy separation of my parents. Why will you urge me to talk of these things?—you will kill me." (A new light began to open up before Basil's mind.) "More explanation than this I cannot, I will not give—not for my own sake, but because it would involve the dearest fame of others."

"And you do not love him, then?"

"How can you ask me such a question? I give you my honour to all I have said ; I can give no further proof ; if that is not satisfactory, leave me, at once and for ever. More on the subject I will not utter."

How short is the step between extremes, in hearts where love is master ! There was a long silence,

during which he sat unable to frame a sentence, his mind filled with conflicting gladness and regret; at length he spoke:—

“ My dearest Marianne, I have been misled, but I could not help it. I have been very harsh and rude, but your own heart, I am sure, will tell you I have not been wrong. Can you forgive me, my own good, noble girl? I have every confidence in your truth and honour, and will never doubt you more. I know your gentleness, your patience, and generosity, and that you will forgive. I have vexed you much, but your own candour must allow that it all arose from my vehement devotion to you, which is the one passion of my existence.”

It was hard for her to resist his pleading, to withhold forgiveness from him on whom her heart doted. She tried to do it, at least for some time, but could not hold out, and tearfully gave way, owning to his raptured questioning, that he was the sole object of her love.

It would be needless for us to describe in words the conversation that ensued, for the fancy of our readers would anticipate the scene, and we and our details be overleaped and left far behind. It ended, after some

hours, in a solemn engagement that they should be united in marriage on the earliest day that should be convenient to them both, when she should be altogether and unalterably his own, and there should be no more doubt, fear, or jealousy.

Strange enough, this hardly appeared in the eyes of either of them an event of unusual weight or moment. They had both looked forward to it for years, during which they had lived together in daily familiar and confidential intercourse. There were no arrangements to be made ; with the exception of her mother, no human being had control over either of them, or could direct or oppose their desires : there were no persons to be consulted, and a doubtful consent entreated from them ; there was no one even to be informed of the fact. Not an obstacle stood in the way. He had long been his own master, and as to worldly matters was perfectly independent, and could abundantly afford to follow the bent of his wishes. She again was well convinced that her mother loved her too dearly to withhold from her anything that she earnestly desired.

But when he asked Mrs. Esterling's consent, the behaviour of the latter appeared to him remarkable.

She seemed to suffer a strange and sudden depression of health and spirits, and entreated him to allow her another day, when she would be prepared to give him an answer.

Next day, when he met her, her language and conduct seemed as extraordinary. At one time she told him she could not yet, for private reasons of her own, give her sanction to the marriage of her daughter, but, as she could stand in the way of nothing that could conduce to the happiness of either of them, they might be married without any opposition on her part, if they were both willing to run all risks for good or evil, only she desired to be altogether unconnected with the matter. She had no hesitation in intrusting to him the future welfare of her only child, yet she had many fears that the happiness they expected would prove an illusion, and, if ever it did, they should not reproach her with furthering this measure, which she called him to witness she had never encouraged, if she had not discountenanced it. Marianne, she continued, had many imperfections; she was lowly born, of the very humblest class; her parents had been (here she trembled) most unfortunate, if not criminal—(“She alludes to their bankruptcy,” thought he); —and, were

one tithe of their evil fortunes known, a stigma would attach to her. No, it could not to her, but still this world was malignant, and apt to visit the sins of the parents on the children.

In this way she ran on, getting more confused and excited with every sentence, till Basil, positively in pain for her, withdrew, with a vague belief that he had obtained her acquiescence.

In a week or two Marianne and he were quietly and unostentatiously married, according to the short and simple ceremony of their church, by their friend and pastor, Dr. ——. The only remark he made regarded their youth, for she still wanted some months of eighteen, and he as many of twenty-one. Yet they seemed so loving and devoted, and he knew him to be so talented, so virtuous, and honourable, and she amid her blushes looked so beautiful, that, as he bade Heaven bless them, there was a warmth and kindness in his benignant smile, as if they had been his own children.

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